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# MY OWN MAIN STREET

WM. A. JOHNSTON



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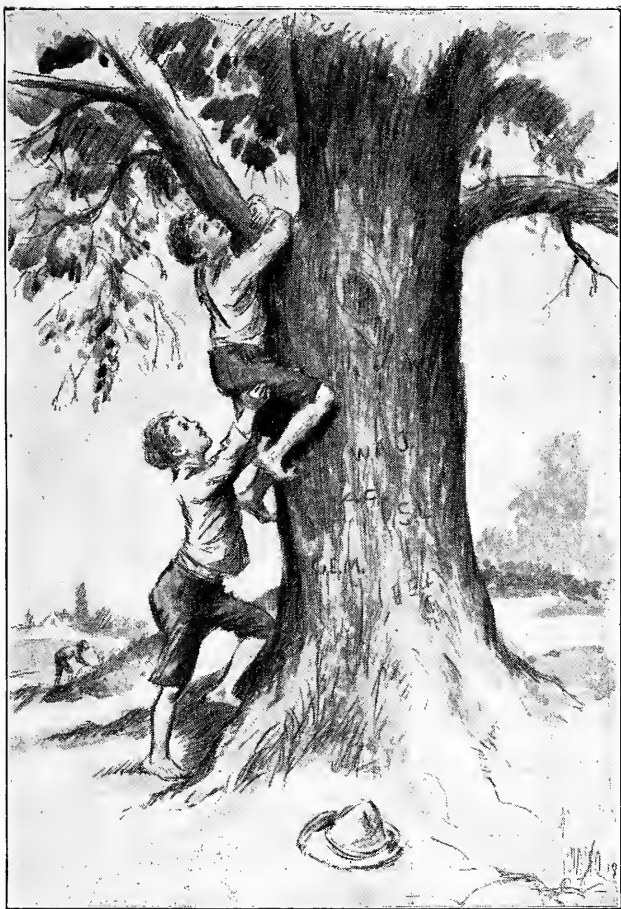
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The Old Sycamore



# ✓ MY OWN MAIN STREET

BY

Wm. A. Johnston ✓



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TO MY SON, George E. Johnston,  
who served thru the World War  
as First Lieutenant in THE UNITED  
STATES AIR SERVICE, and who re-  
turned home from overseas a living  
exemplification of the cruelties of war,  
the injustice of republics for sacrifices  
volunteered, and freely given at the  
first call to arms—and to his departed  
friend and fellow-officer, Henry Clay  
Thompson, who gave the supreme sac-  
rifice at the time and place my son  
received his injuries, and whose body  
now rests in a charming little church-  
yard overlooking the North Sea, in  
farthest northern England—this little  
narrative of American life is affection-  
ately and reverently dedicated.



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## FOREWORD

**I**N compiling these reminiscences of "My Own Main Street," the writer's thought was to keep the manuscript, crude sketches and drawings of the places and characters mentioned only as a "Family Souvenir," and it was only after much persuasion by those who had been permitted to read the notes and see the drawings and sketches that the objections to its publication were overcome.

Many a pleasant leisure hour was spent in writing the incidents and describing the times, places, characters (no two characters are ever alike), and in making the sketches and drawings. I have also taken the liberty of using several poems of Edgar A. Guest and Will M. Maupin, and have made free adaptations from Maupin's "Home-coming" and "Old Days"—two men whose verse and prose are so intensely human and so truly

## FOREWORD

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interpretative of the every-day life of the common people.

To have published this story of "My Own Main Street" at an earlier day might have been a breach of trust and decorum. The terms of trust, I hope, have been nulled by limitation. Many of the characters named have paid the debt of nature, and, if any be living, the long time intervening has, I hope, blurred any asperity the descriptions may seem to contain, or that they could hardly object to so remote a reference to them.

## SAD PERVERSITY.\*

When but a little boy, it seemed  
My dearest rapture ran  
In fancy ever, when I dreamed  
I was a Man—a *Man!*

Now—sad perversity! My theme  
Of rarest, purest joy  
Is when, in fancy blest, I dream  
I am a Little Boy!

---

\*From the "Biographical Edition of the Complete Works of James Whitcomb Riley." Copyright, 1913. Used by the special permission of the publishers, the Bobbs-Merrill Company.





## CHAPTER I.

SOMETHING THAT LEADS UP TO AND  
EXPLAINS SOMETHING ELSE.

**H**ERE is no volume for the city-bred. He never knows what youth may mean afield. He must, perforce, have missed in life the wonder of real boyhood in the outdoors, the unconscious delight of knowing every one and every corner of every back lot.

The sketchy recollections here set down were first intended for a personal souvenir, and with them went my own crude drawings and a cruder map. Now, those who saw the drawings, and who read casually, protest that, though the Main Street of this lazy narrative was that of a little Pennsylvania town, all Main Streets are alike, and they believe that those who, all too many years ago, knew Main Streets, will not be ungrateful if their memories are stirred.

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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The illustrations of Harry C. Temple, of the American Newspaper Service, New York, are proof enough that he was reared in a small town, and that he still can visualize its tragedy and comedy, its hopes and fears, impulses and emotions. He is the richer for it.

So, I hope, are all to whom brick pavements and high buildings, street-cars and street lighting, came later in life. Any one can know a city and what a city means, but one must be country-bred to know the country as it is worth while to know it.

## THE ROAD TO YESTERDAY.

WILL M. MAUPIN.

Down the long, broad road as it leads away  
To the pleasant scenes of a yesterday—  
To the orchard wide where the laden trees  
Swing to and fro in the balmy breeze;  
By the old well-sweep with its creaking pole  
And the big white rock by the swimming-hole—  
Ah, the scent that comes from the new-mown hay

Whose long drifts lay

Where the sunbeams play

On the long, wide road to yesterday!

The milestones stand with their tinge of gray  
As the mind harks back to yesterday,  
And the road grows smooth as the eyes behold  
The long-lost scenes of the days of old—  
Faces bright of the old school crowd  
Long since wrapped in sheet and shroud;  
Welcome shouts from the chums so gay

Who romp and play

In the old-time way

By the long, wide road to yesterday!

The evening lamp through the window shines,  
And we see once more the stumbling lines  
Of the old text-books, and each puzzling rule

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

---

That caused us grief in the hours of school.  
And a sweet old face 'gainst the window pane  
Looks down the reach of the shady lane;  
And the welcome gleams in her bright eyes play  
    As on we stray  
    Through the evening gray  
Down the old, old road to yesterday!

Down the long, wide road as it leads away  
To the old-time scenes of that yesterday  
When the heart was light as the thistle's down,  
And we little knew of the hard world's frown;  
Where the friends we knew were the girls and boys  
To divide our woes and to share our joys—  
Where life was sweet and the hours were gay  
    With love and play  
    In our childhood way  
At the end of the road to yesterday!

## CHAPTER II.

### THE BEGINNING OF MAIN STREET AND INTRODUCTION OF "SKINNY" AND "GEORGE."

I HAD a stone bruise on my left heel; I was sunburnt, barefoot, clad in gingham shirt, stained Kentucky jeans supported by a pair of dad's old suspenders, and I bore for my protection a slingshot and a pocketful of carefully selected pebbles. It was early Indian summer, on a Saturday morning, and I set out to explore, for the first time, the Main Street in my native town. Days like that no man who was not city-bred can forget.

It was a holiday, and I had always wanted the chance. For weeks I had dreamed, boy fashion, of traveling that street, without the guidance of my elders, from Welty's watering-trough to Bair's Mill. It was a good three miles in all, just such a three miles of dusty road as

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

---

runs—or ran fifty years ago—through most county-seats in America, and it was very wonderful to me.

So I rose early, went out to Barclay's pasture for our cow, and ate my breakfast while my brother milked her. Then I drove the cow back, put up the bars, and felt my day's work was done. From the pasture an avenue of old locust-trees led to the old watering-trough, and there I drank deeply of the cool spring which fed it.

Climbing to the top of the moss-covered trough, I found the surface agitated by the antics of a school of water-bugs, which skipped and slid and took counsel together after the aimless fashion of their kind. I flung pebbles at them, but they gathered again and again, and slid round and round and back and forth, *en masse*, just the same. I have since learned that persecution has the same effect on men.

It was Indian summer, but no boy can play about a watering-trough and keep his feet dry. I bathed mine, and, as I did so, flung acorns at a covey of yellow but-

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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Welty's Watering-trough

terflies which, despite impending frost, were hovering over the prints of horses' hoofs in the mud beside the trough. I dipped my broad-brimmed straw hat in the water, and tried in vain to catch a small green frog. I pushed out the crown of the hat clown-fashion, set it all dripping upon my head, and journeyed southwards, kicking up the dust in the wheel-tracks, chasing the big, grayish-brown grasshoppers and flinging stones at the chipmunks which frisked along the

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

---

worm fences. Main Street's lure was waning.

To eastward, beyond a great patch of goldenrod and wild aster, gorgeous in green and red and gold, were Culbertson's Woods. I could have played there all day long. I think I could even now.

I might have gathered nuts and late mulberries, wild grapes and Indian turnip, sassafras, inkberries, corn silk from the neighboring fields for next week's smoking. I could have chased ground squirrels, used my slingshot upon the red-winged blackbirds, dramatized imaginary adventures all day long. And, on my way home, I could have smeared my hands and legs and face with pokeberries and returned at night a regular desperado.

But in the dust two tumblebugs rolled, industriously, a round, brown ball, not unlike a crocky marble. They moved toward town, steadily, if slowly. I teased them, but it did not alter their course. If tumblebugs could stick to their path, so could I. Culbertson's Woods were always there.



## REAL SWIMMING.\*

EDGAR A. GUEST.

I saw him in the distance, as the train went speed-  
ing by,  
A shivery little fellow standing in the sun to dry,  
And a little pile of clothing very near him I could  
see ;  
He was owner of a gladness that had once belonged  
to me.  
I have shivered as he shivered ; I have dried the  
way he dried ;  
I've stood naked in God's sunshine with my gar-  
ments at my side ;  
And I thought, as I beheld him, of the many weary  
men  
Who would like to go in swimming as a little boy  
again.

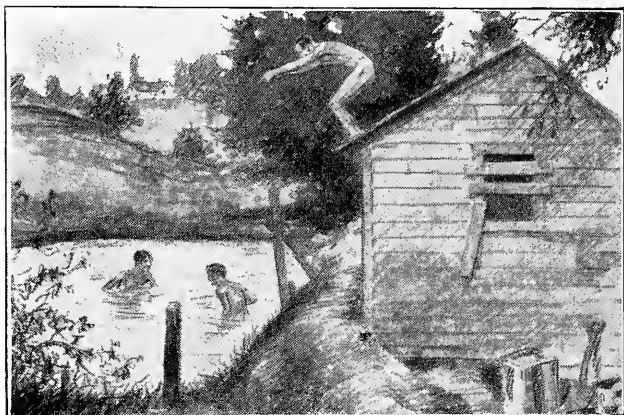
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## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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Shrill voices came from Taylor's ice-pond, and I had no trouble in recognizing them. "Skinny" was there, and George too, and I knew the water, despite the chill in the morning air, could not yet be cold.



Taylor's Ice-pond

I climbed in the little north window of the ice-house, and dug down through the dry sawdust to the moist, then to the wet, and at last to the ice. With a Barlow knife, used as a pick, I clipped off a good-sized chunk, slipped out the window, cut around the north end of the shed, jumped

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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the fence at the corner, and hailed my friends.

Two killdeers rose, scolding, circled the pond a couple of times, and flew away in disgust. I shared my ice with George and "Skinny," washed the sawdust and mud from my own share, sucked and swallowed it hastily, and peeled off my clothes. Then I dove from the roof of the ice-house, and proceeded to more serious business.

With a wet dab of brown clay, I painted my companions' naked bodies grotesquely, striping one perpendicularly and the other tiger-fashion; for myself, I preferred two-inch squares. Our faces were those of Zulu warriors, and we began the war-dance, chanting.

Then old Jersey came around the corner of the ice-house, striding resolutely, and he carried a long apple sucker. He did not believe in having boys burrow in his ice-house and uncover valuable ice. He pretended not to believe in boys going swimming and undressed for it.

We splashed ashore, snatched up our clothes, and raced along the road fence to

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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hide in a clump of elderberry bushes. Jersey was too wise to follow, and we set ourselves to dress.

Some vandal—and I have some trouble clearing my own good name—had visited their clothes, and there was “beef to chaw” before arms would go into sleeves or feet down trouser legs. There always is when boys go swimming.

We dressed without delay, clay stripes and all, and dodged furtively through Dave Allman’s garden, picking wild cherries as we went and skipping gaudy, varicolored, old-fashioned flower-beds, on our way to the big wooden pump in the yard. Dave’s daughter—“Slim Jin” the boys called her—stood in the doorway and laughed wisely at our streaked faces. A muslin bag of curdled milk, soon to be schmierkase, hung on the jamb of the door.

“Slim Jin” gave us a bucket, a couple of handfuls of soft soap and plenty of advice, and we used all three. Boylike, then, we showed our gratitude by knocking pears off the trees as we went through the front yard.

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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Wading through catnip and horehound, horsemint and pennyroyal, knee-deep along the fence, we climbed over into Barclay's field and headed for the shade of the big locust-trees. There was a toadstool there, of record size, which we tore to pieces, and a white locust shell strangely flawless; then a bumblebees' nest.

There is but one boy's way of looting a bumblebees' nest, and we tried that. We set out to kill every bee as it came out in response to prodding with a stick, and completed the work with but two casualties. "Skinny" was stung on the leg, and George had a closed eye, which required treatment with mud. I fell into a cluster of wild locusts.

Bumblebee honey isn't of the best, but we ate it, strong and dark though it was, and turned our attention to the goldfinches—yellow birds, we called them—which flew among the thistles. We used our slingshots as they flew and twittered; we tried to hit them as they perched on quivering milkweed-pods to feast upon the seeds. We aimed in vain, too, at meadow-larks on the ground and along

the fences, and always missed. Then we came to Brouchler's apple orchard.

I have read since, I think in Burroughs, that "the apple is indeed the fruit of youth," and I believe it as I recall the Rambos which we found there.

Certain it is that, when man ceases to eat apples unashamed upon the street; when he grows reluctant to carry them in his pockets; when he does not visit his neighbor's orchard, or spends his winter evenings without them close to hand—he has begun to age, either in heart or years.

## CHAPTER III.

“HEN” BROUCHLER’S BLACKSMITH SHOP,  
RAG CARPETS AND “SPEAKER” AND  
“HONEY” BANKS.

NEXT comes Henry Brouchler’s blacksmith shop, and blacksmiths’ shops are always wonderful to boys. We never passed that way without a pause for greetings, and to see his horseshoes in the making.

“Hen,” as he was known to all the county, was at the anvil, and the fiery sparks flew every way, keeping us marking time to save our bare toes. He had miscalculated size a few moments before, and had sheared off a bit of metal which looked for all the world like a piece of putty or a little painted block.

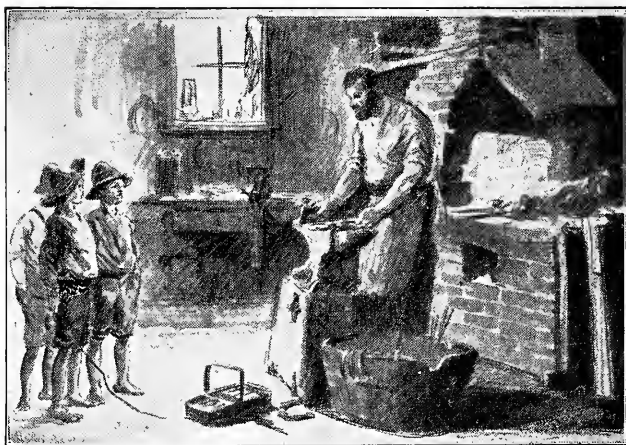
This George picked up, and he shrieked as his fingers closed upon the searing metal. The odor of burning flesh mingled with that of scorched shavings

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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from horses' hooves and burning charcoal. "Hen" laid down his hammer wearily. He was used to boys.

He wrapped the blistered fingers in a soiled rag and soothed with liberal ointment of some kind of horse liniment or



Henry Brouchler's Blacksmith Shop

other, and drove us out, threatening frightful penalties if we ventured there again.

Henry Brouchler was famed throughout the county for the high grade and superior finish of the wheelbarrows which



## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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he turned out betweentimes. They were all bright red, matching Schuey's barn in color, and so heavily and strongly made that it took a strong man to handle one. I remember that once, when my father had a new one of that make, it took three of us boys to budge it with half a load.

A few paces down the street two iron pegs stood at proper intervals in the trampled, cindery earth, with four horse-shoes, one of them a "ringer," bearing testimony to the pitch which won yesterday's last game. The loafers of the town had not yet gathered for their favorite sport, but we knew that within a few hours the street would resound with argument and contention on the fine points of the game, and with debate upon the relative merits of the contestants.

I suspect, now, that times were hard that year in which so many of my fellow-townsmen were content to devote their time and energy to this simple and unattractive game. I had occasion once, during a period of industrial depression, to travel from coast to coast, and I can remember how I looked from car window at

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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village after village, small town after small town, to see groups of idle men about the railway station lounging as spectators at this idle game.

I have concluded since that, whatever its handicap in pointlessness, pitching horseshoes is the favored diversion of the unemployed, in the small towns at least.



Levi Brouchler

We met Levi Brouchler then, a little, red-haired, red-bearded veteran of the war between the States, who never appeared anywhere in

public save in the full uniform of a private soldier.

Levi was a slow walker, and a most deliberate one, but no man along Main Street took longer strides. Levi often boasted of how he marched in the old days, and the story ran that he had been the one little man in a long-legged company.

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

---

He was not fond of work, although he turned his hand occasionally to the production of a few oak shingles or an order of fence posts or palings.

In the Brouchler yard, which we reached next, was an old wooden swing we boys never passed in haste. George and "Skinny" and I climbed up, and "pumped" desperately, higher and higher, until we could touch the last sprays on the lower branches of the big tree. As "the old cat died," we leaped down to race down the road behind the old Salem hack, and climbed aboard, despite the protests and the threats of old man Patty.

We rode in with him to Cashey's Corners, resisting the temptation to cut across Culbertson's field to the big sycamore-tree, where generations of that town's boys had carved their names in the white bark.

Then we lost George. He lived at Cashey's with his aunt, and she spied him on the hack, and summoned him to help Uncle Zemph with his carpet-weaving.

Karl Zemph was a hustling little German, fat and full of business, always bust-

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

---

ling and always at work. His carpet-weaving business was to the people of that old town what the neighborhood motion-picture theater is to the neighborhood to-day.

Our townsfolk did not fare afield on wintry evenings in those days. They stayed by their own firesides, cutting and sewing for rag carpets and rugs. When the rags were cut into narrow, ribbon-like lengths, they were joined together at the ends and rolled into bowling-ball size. When enough were ready for a rag carpet or a rag rug Uncle Zemph, as all the town knew him, converted them into durable and bright-colored wares.

Small boys liked to watch this process. We used to envy George his familiarity with it, his right to tinker with the clumsy loom. And we marveled, of course, at the transformation of rags into rugs. It is wonderful to me now.

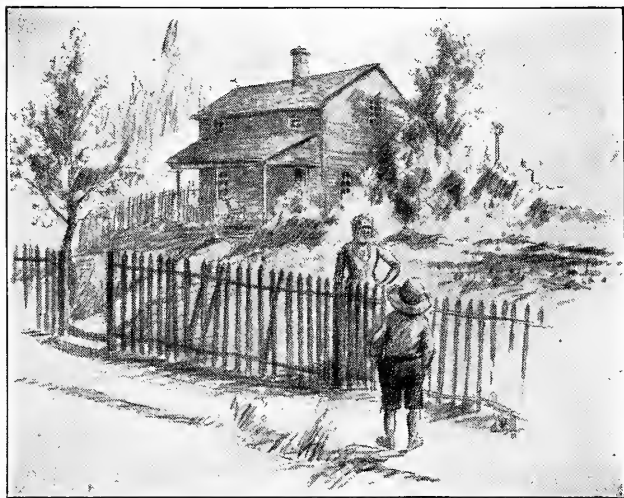
At the foot of the hill, just within the north borough line, was old Aunt Sally Allsworth's weather-stained cottage, surrounded by beds of tall hollyhocks and sweet-smelling pinks, with warmer-

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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colored, old-fashioned flowers everywhere. A fox grapevine clung to the choke-pear-tree before the door.

Skinny chucked a stick into the tree, bringing down a handful of hard and



Aunt Sally

puckery pears, and a wren scolded from a neighboring peach-tree.

Aunt Sally lived alone with cats and flowers, and she did not encourage friendships. She was a little old maid, reputed to enjoy an independent income sufficient

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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for her economical mode of life. The pride of her heart was her garden, and strange stories ran of how she had the heavy work done there.

One spring Aunt Sally hired "Skinny's" brother Fulton to spade, rake and plant the plot, and Fulton spent a full Saturday holiday on the job, despite the fact that fish were biting. At dusk Aunt Sally came out into the yard.

Fulton's back ached, but he glowed with pride in the fact that he had earned some money and he had spent half the day planning his purchases.



Fultie

"Fultie," said Aunt Sally, "you have been a very good boy, and the garden looks very well indeed. And here is a bright, new penny, and I'm sure I hope you won't spend it foolishly."

We always passed Aunt Sally's in a hurry, lest she ask us to work for her. That was a way she had, and we boys knew it.

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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On the hill we met "Speaker" and "Honey" Banks, elderly colored folk of old plantation stock. They were a prayerful couple, prominent in the negro church of the town, of whom good stories exist.

"Speaker" was a big, black man, a powerful exhorter, but susceptible to the blandishments of the "fair" sex. Though a deacon in his church, he had been surprised one evening holding hands with one of the ewe lambs of the flock. There was excitement in the congregation.



"Speaker" and  
"Honey" Banks

Brought before the church session, "Speaker" faced inquiry in regard to his conduct, and he responded with an astonishing plea.

"Brudders," he said, "you hab seen de picters ob de 'Great Shepherd.' Ain't he allus got a lamb ob de flock in his arms?"

But the plea failed, for, after grave argument, the session brought in a resolution to the effect that:

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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“Fo’ the future peace an’ dignity ob de congregation, de nex’ time Deacon Banks am impelled to take a lamb in his arms, he pick out a **ram** lamb.”

“Honey” Banks, his wife, was heroine of a not altogether dissimilar tale. In street attire, she preferred the most extreme styles, running to large patterns and solid colors, a usual ornament being a necklace of buckeyes or horse-chestnuts, strung on a greasy corset cord. She invariably “got the Spirit” at every camp-meeting, and she delighted in giving way to her emotions.

Once, indeed, when she was headed noisily for the mourners’ bench, a well-disposed sister took it upon herself to quiet her.

“Go way from me, Sister Mandie, go way,” she said. “I doan want you to quiet me. I want Brudder Ephryham to quiet me.”

This was another of the stories that the old town liked.

Halfway up the hill Widow Jack’s house is going up. “Ez” Campbell and “Watt” Borlin, rival teamsters, each with



## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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big, gray teams, are bringing in the brick. They race all day.

“Watt” talks through his nose to his horses all the time, and he undertakes to unload his burden in order to beat “Ez” back to the brickyard.

Always as he passed “Ez’s” team on the street we could hear him call, “Kum hon, hu yed-hiskered son-hoo-a-gun.” It was his favored salutation, and every boy in town mimicked him.

Next door Culbertson’s new brick house was nearly finished, and a noisy group of carpenters was busy within. They let us gather a lot of blocks of wood and a pile of nails, which we hid in the fence corner near the road, to be called for later. Boys always do that—why, I can not understand.

There must be something about scraps of wood, so plentiful about a new house, which stirs a boy’s ambition, but I can not remember ever using any of the bushels of them I saved.

Next was Attorney Jack Marchant’s house, and, of course, we dragged sticks along the fence palings. Tip, the oldest

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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and crossest dog in town, came snarling out on the run, and we poked him bravely on the nose, once we made sure the gate was closed.

## CHAPTER IV.

JOHNNY POWELL, BUCKWHEAT VENDER,  
SURPRISES HIS WIFE.

**T**HEN Johnny Powell came by, and refused us a ride. We retorted after the manner of our kind and Johnny chirruped to his horse. He was a vulnerable target for the town's wit.

Johnny specialized in growing buckwheat, and buckwheat flour made from the produce of his farm was famed throughout the county. I'll never forget those cakes—brown and light and tender and the full size of a plate, with a crisp, lazy fringe about the edges and little, volcano-like mounds and craters everywhere, designed, no doubt, to accommodate home-made butter and home-made maple syrup.



Johnny Powell

John Powell was not as good to look at as the cakes made from his buckwheat. He would not change his clothes. It was told of him, and I never questioned the truth of the story, that when one suit was actually falling to pieces, he would haggle and bargain for half a day for the cheapest hand-me-down in town, and wear it thereafter, night and day, through rain and snow and sunshine, until similar necessity for a change arose again.

Once, though, his custom brought him to grief. Snake-like, he had decided to change his skin, and he schemed to surprise his wife agreeably. On the way home with the new suit he undertook a complete change on the bridge over Loyalhanna Creek, and flung his threadbare garments over the side into the rushing stream. He learned, then, that the jolting of his springless wagon over the rough roads had cost him the package containing the new suit, but it was too late. It could not be said of Johnny, in this back-to-nature costume, that "loveliness needs not the foreign aid of ornament, but is, when unadorned, adorned the most."

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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He went home by dark, and the accident did not spoil the surprise for his wife.

### THE DECISION.

G. S. APPLGARTH.

Ever heard tell o' Jake Wienerkraut—  
Feller that fanned Mike Casey out—  
And the wonderful fraction hit he made  
In the closest ball game ever played?  
That was some game, I want to say,  
An' it took some scorin' to score that play,  
An' it took an' umpire what knowed th' game  
To properly measure an' weigh th' same.  
That was back about—let me see—  
Somewhere 'long about seventy-three,  
Jimsons an' Chickweeds face to face  
Leadin' teams in th' pennant race.  
Crowd was fierce an' th' day was fair,  
Seemed like all mankind was there.  
Teams keyed up like a fiddle-string,  
Neck-an'-neck since early spring;  
Both determined to cop the rag,  
An' this was th' game that meant th' flag.  
Eighteen innings, I hope to die,  
Shades of night was drawin' nigh,  
Score one-one an' two men out,  
When the Chickweeds sent in Wienerkraut.  
Jimsons knowed by his wicked eye  
Time had come fer to do or die.  
Zip! Strike one; Jake only smiled;

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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Zing! Strike two; an' th' crowd went wild;  
Zow! Wow-wow, came a rending crash—  
Jumped-up Jupiter, what a smash!  
Sphere went rocketin' up in air,  
Seemed to bust like a bomb up there;  
Ball itself went clean out o' sight,  
Cover was ketched by the man at the right;  
Jake was a-tearin' toward third sack,  
Umpire hollers an' calls him back;  
Fans was stunned an' th' players dazed,  
But, say, that umpire was never phased;  
Motions for silence, calm an' cool,  
An' this is th' way he applied th' rule:  
“Half o' th' ball went over the fence,  
Half was ketched by the fielder, hence  
Half was a putout an' half a run,  
Score stands  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 1.”

## CHAPTER V.

### "SPLINTERS."

WE were in town, now, and the board walk began, a board walk ever full of splinters, which kept our Barlow knives busy. And here was the broad space devoted to the academy.

"The Blue Boys" and "The Old Westmorelands" were both practic-



Splinters

ing on the grounds, making ready for the last game of the season, a sort of world's championship contest for the county and the countryside. But we could see baseball almost any day, so were not inclined to tarry here.

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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We cut across through the school-grounds, under the maples, past the compass stones used by the surveyors in adjusting their instruments, and climbed the old frame stile, worn by many steps. There was a store there that day, improvised, owned and conducted by "Guinea" Gilson, "Toad" Mitinger and "Bill" Cherry, "Harrison Avenue and Mud-town" boys.

A sign above their stand bore the words, "No Trust—No Bust," and they sold vinegar sling and pear apples, the latter, no doubt, stolen from Culbertson's orchard. They asked five pins for a drink of sling and two for a big pear apple, but we still had Rambo apples in our pockets. We lacked pins, so we traded our white locust skin and our apples for two drinks of the compound of vinegar, water and sugar, and hurried on.

We did not fear our teachers, on Saturday, and our delight was noisy when we found on the old board fence where some resentful youngsters had scrawled "Hog-face Shawley." We supplemented it with "Michigan Apples," Mr. Shawley's other



## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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popular nickname, and wondered if he'd recognize our writing on Monday.

The boys called Teacher Shawley "Hog Face" because of his heavy jowl, little eyes, big ears and scrubby beard. "Michigan Apples" had to do with history.

Shawley came from Michigan, and once, shortly before the Christmas holidays, he had won the good opinion of his pupils by the announcement that he had sent to Michigan for a barrel of the best apples that grew, and that he intended to give them to the school.

The apples came, and Shawley stored them in his room at McQuaid's Hotel. The young men of the town learned of his plan, and helped themselves to more than half the barrel. The joke was on the children, rather than on Shawley, for the teacher promptly announced that, since he lacked apples to go around the class, he would give none at all. He made quite a speech, too, about those who had found his store.

Aunt Bell was a more popular teacher, and one who inspired more respect. She

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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ruled and the whole school enjoyed her rule.

Once, I remember, a newly arrived English boy (Darsey Bills) brought vermin in his shock of hair into the school-room, and took his seat in the middle of the three-seated benches then in use.

He scratched, and presently his seat-mates scratched. Aunt Bell guessed why.

She had Darsey taken, despite his protests, to the livery-stable, sheared with horse-clippers and well greased with lard and red precipitate. She made trouble in many households, too, by encouraging the most strenuous of fine hair-combings and shampooing.

It was Aunt Bell who tried her best to teach "Bud" King to spell, and failed. He could not get past b-a-t. She tried him on that again and again, and finally spelled it out to him, and asked him what it meant. He looked at her blankly.

"Why, Buddie," said Aunt Bell, "you must know what it is that flies around in the early evening. You've seen it ever so many times. Spell it again, now, and pronounce it."

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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“Bud” never lacked assurance.

“B-A-T,” he spelled confidently,  
“Whippoorwill.”

There is the Catholic Church and Father Otto, the good priest, walks to and fro in the garden beside it, reading a book. Old Neddy McGuire, homeward bound from mass, was just coming out, but we could not stop to ask him of the accomplishments of his sons, or concerning the famine of forty-eight, or question him disrespectfully in regard to his politics, which irritated him.



Neddy McGuire

Neddy used to strain our credulity by his yarn of how, when Ireland's crops failed, the land-owners imported corn on the cob, and the starving peasantry, mistaking grains for bark, shelled them off and boiled the cob. He insisted that his family had thrived upon it, even as upon a bread-and-meat diet in America.

## THE PLAYMATES OF YESTERDAY.

Oh, where are the playmates of yesterday,  
The fellows we knew in school?  
Oh, what has become of the studious one,  
And where, oh, where, is the fool?  
Oh, what has become of the orator,  
Whose passion was to recite?  
And the bashful kid who could speak no piece  
Unless he succumbed to fright?  
Oh, what has become of the model boy,  
Who was always the teacher's pet?  
And where, oh, where, is the tough young nut,  
The one we can never forget?  
The studious one, so we have been told,  
Is driving a hack these days;  
While the fool owns stock in a bank or two,  
And a railroad that always pays.  
The orator that we knew so well  
Is clerk in a dry-goods store;  
While the bashful kid we knew has been  
In Congress ten years or more.  
The model boy is behind the bars  
For stealing a neighbor's cow.  
And you ask what of the tough young nut?  
Oh, he's a preacher now.

—*Anonymous.*

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE BELLS OF GREENDALE, THE GRAVE-DIGGER, AND THE TOWN PAINTER AND BAND ROOM.

A CROSS from the Catholic Church we halted for a moment on the little space dear to the heart of every boy in town. There it was that great public events were celebrated, political or otherwise. There bonfires blazed when partisan jollifications or rallies were held, and there the spellbinders of the day held their crowds. There, too, the watchfires of liberty burned on the Fourth of July.

I remember how, the night before Centennial Day in 1876, "Skinny" and I stayed up until the stroke of twelve to ring the old academy bell, and blend its chimes with those of the bells of the courthouse and the churches.

The old town's bells, indeed, are unforgettable. I can hear them now in my

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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dreams, and I believe that every small-town boy has similar recollections. Each bell had its own peculiar sound.

First, as dawn broke, came the solemn tolling of the Catholic Church bell, summoning the parishioners to early mass. Then there were school-bells—first, second and third. They did not toll, for the Senior boys who rang them had not learned the trick, but they always said, at least they did to me, “Come, girls—Come, boys.”



Bells

We had a rule, then, that the doors were closed for five minutes after the last stroke, and those who came late had to face the principal. Classmates, too, were privileged to laugh as they found their way to their seats. Tardy marks on conduct cards meant something when parents had to sign them.

At nine o'clock the courthouse bell called judge, jurymen, lawyers, witnesses and court officers to their places, and tragedy or comedy began. At noon again,

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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as we played our several ways home, the cheerful sound of farmhouse bells, rung as dinner warning for hired men, came from afar. Those bells, I know now, had an appeal more than purely physical, when softened by distance.

After dinner the schoolhouse and courthouse bells rang again, and every Wednesday evening the church bells called Christian folk to weekly prayer-meeting.

But boys liked best the fire-bell when it clanged out on stormy nights, and they scrambled into their clothes and raced to the old fire-engine house to help the first arrivals haul out old "Pat Lion" and "Good Will," the hand-pumped, hand-propelled fire-engine and run it to the place where a human bucket brigade was forming. Their pistons were always frozen in the winter-time, and hot water from the nearest home was usually in demand until the fire was out.

One of the advantages of fire in the old town was that the women folk made it a point to supply the fire-fighters with coffee and sandwiches, and the boys never failed to get their share, and more.

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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And no boy from that town could forget the bells of Christmas eve, which announced the annual Sunday-school parties, or those of New Year's eve, which hailed the new year. Oddly enough, they mean more to me in memory than ever they did then.

Next was the old cemetery, whose white gravestones, weather-beaten, always stirred the thoughts of childhood and roused the passer-by to gloomy meditation. It seemed, at dusk, that all the stones leaned toward you, perhaps because the prevailing winds were westerly and the frost helped.

The man who coined the phrase about "whistling to keep one's courage up" spoke truth. I never passed that spot at dusk or after without doing just that most resolutely.

Just beyond the church was the new cemetery and the new grave of Daisy Lawrence. The flowers lay still, unwithered, on the mound.

A dwarfed, ill-favored, misshapen man, nearly as broad as tall, was wielding pick and shovel near by, as it seemed he



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Passing Cemetery

always was. To me, as I look back, he was always digging, making graves or filling them. I have heard him at night, and the dull glow of his lantern and the muffled sound of his pick always frightened me. Whistling would not serve then. I ran.

Cary Maynes was the sexton, but the whole town called him "Ground-hog," not only to designate his calling, but to distinguish him from the other Maynes of the town.



"Ground-hog"

Just then we met Bill Walters, the town house painter, and he, too, was a melancholy soul. He had ideas—advanced

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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ones—about color schemes, but he could never get them accepted.

Bill had just one talk for a prospective customer, and it always ran like this:

“My dear man, my dear man, if you’ll only let me use my judgment in choosing your color scheme, I will guarantee to please you.

“You’re all wrong when you want the body red and the trimming yellow. It’s against nature’s harmony. Now, my scheme is simple.

“Why not call your colonial house a white rose, and give it green petals and a green stem and green leaves? Then you’d have something.”

But Bill could never convert a customer, and the old town was painted every color and every combination of colors.

I suspect, now, that, despite his eccentricities, he was an artist at heart, a man who dreamed of a model village, though he lacked the ability to make others visualize that dream.

Starting down the hill, we crossed the street to climb upon the Fliggers’ stone wall, a mural wonder ten feet high, which

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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Fliggers' Stone Wall

seemed to us an engineering marvel comparable to the great wall of China. The top of that wall offered weary travelers who were not too weary to climb a haven of retreat. It was a favored refuge, too, for lovers, for the spreading branches of great maples came low over it.

We sat down to watch the strutting peafowl in the Marchant yard until an Irish terrier, owned by the Misses Fliggers, discovered our presence. His frantic snarling and barking brought out his mistresses, who lived alone, and we had learned that old maids did not approve of small-boy trespassers.

We always wished, in those days, that some time they would close the house and go on a visit, if only that we might play at will on that great wall, and have a good look at the big thermometer beside the

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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front doorway. It was the only big one of its kind in town.

We cut across the street, as always, to visit the hook-and-ladder house, and made our way in. We climbed over the apparatus assembled there, hoping against hope that a fire might break out with us on the job, and then, removing a loose board in the wall, crept into the dingy little back room, which, for many years, was the rehearsal headquarters for the town band.

There could be no more untidy place. Tobacco quids and peanut shells, stubs of stogies and tobacco ashes, burned matches, old paper and dried apple cores lay everywhere. The furnishings were only wooden benches, an old table and some rickety chairs, the latter much mutilated by penknives.

There was cheap and overornate paper on the stained walls, and lithographs of shapely, but none too warmly dressed, actress folk.

No small-town boy forgets that night of nights on which the town band rehearsed; how furtively he stole from

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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home, raced down the street, mounted the side steps, and gazed with admiration into the room where the boys were practicing their No. 11, 16 or 5, keeping time with their feet, and watching gravely the performances of Prof. Harry Dunspaugh, band leader, and the best all-round musician the town had known.

There is a Prof. Harry Dunspaugh in every community, and he deserves well of it. Every one of them has supplied, however unwittingly, the inspiration to patriotism and good citizenship, and he has won the admiration of every boy. I never knew a bandmaster whose reward was not less than his deserts.



## CHAPTER VII.

THE CHURCH JANITOR, RAILROAD DETECTIVE AND "THE HAUNTED HOUSE."

WHEN we left the bandroom and crossed the street, we met old Uncle Lewis, the colored janitor of the Episcopal Church. While we were talking to him the doors were flung open, and his pretty little daughter Zella came tripping out. She was so fair and comely, so like our own white girls, that in my verdant days I could never comprehend how she could be a colored girl. Some boisterous youths, comprising the "Ludwick Gang," on their way from the depot to root for the old Westmoreland ball team, came marching up the street. They were attended by "Billy the Bum," a nondescript and



"Billy the  
Bum"

nomadic character, friend neither to labor nor water, and wearing enough clothing at this time of year to keep an Arctic explorer warm.

While we were having a look into "Old Man" Earle's book-binding establishment, which he conducted with the aid of his sons, we saw Frank Strong—who was an assistant Pennsylvania Railroad's detective—on his way to meet the 9:16 train, and to his post of duty at the top of the station steps.



Frank Strong

I have dropped into the old town once in awhile within the last thirty years, and never yet have failed to find Frank at his accustomed place at the top of the depot steps. On one of these occasions I shook hands with him, and inquired about some of the old townspeople.

"What has become of 'Old Tommy McCabe,' the railroad track-walker?" I asked. "Oh," said Frank, "he's dead—died of rheumatism." "Well, what of Robert Turner, the station agent?"



## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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"Dead," Frank answered; "died of heart trouble." "And old Mr. Dehalt, the hotel man?" "Dead, too," Frank continued; "blood poisoning." "Well, that's too bad," I said; "I'm sorry to hear of their deaths. But what has become of 'Skillet Breaker' Maynes, the same that you used to call 'Old Blowhorn'?" "Gone, too," Frank answered. "Dead?" I asked. "No, not that," Frank explained. "He didn't exactly die. They just merely poured him back into the bottle again."



"Skillet Breaker" Maynes

Just down the side street on which the band's headquarters fronted, behind a row of majestic maples which kept the graveyard's secrets, was the deserted little house of evil report, haunted, as some house in every little town must be. The old town called it, sometimes, "The House of Fear," a mouth-filling title enough, largely because of the amazing story which Jim Green, black porter at the neighboring

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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hotel, told of an experience he claimed to have had there.

Sometimes we boys could get Jim to tell the story, and he told it well—always in whispers, with much mystery. A traveling salesman, he said, had promised him five dollars if he would spend a night there, so Jim set out at ten in the evening with a lantern, and, stumbling through the bushes in the wilderness of a front yard, made his way into the parlor, and sat down on the floor with the lantern beside him.

“An’ then I heerd a squakety-like noise, an’ I dassent to look ’round,” Jim would say. “An’ I wishet I was home in bed. An’ then my heart beat like the bigges’ drum in Marse Harry Duns-paugh’s band, an’ I felt somethin’ purrin’ against my back, an’ then the bigges’ black cat I ever see brushed against my goose flesh, an’ walked right up to that lantern, an’ curled ’round it, an’ went faster an’ faster. An’ his tail kept gittin’ bigger an’ bigger, an’ his eyes were like headlights on the Pennsylvania aingines, an’ I didn’t need that lantern **none**.”

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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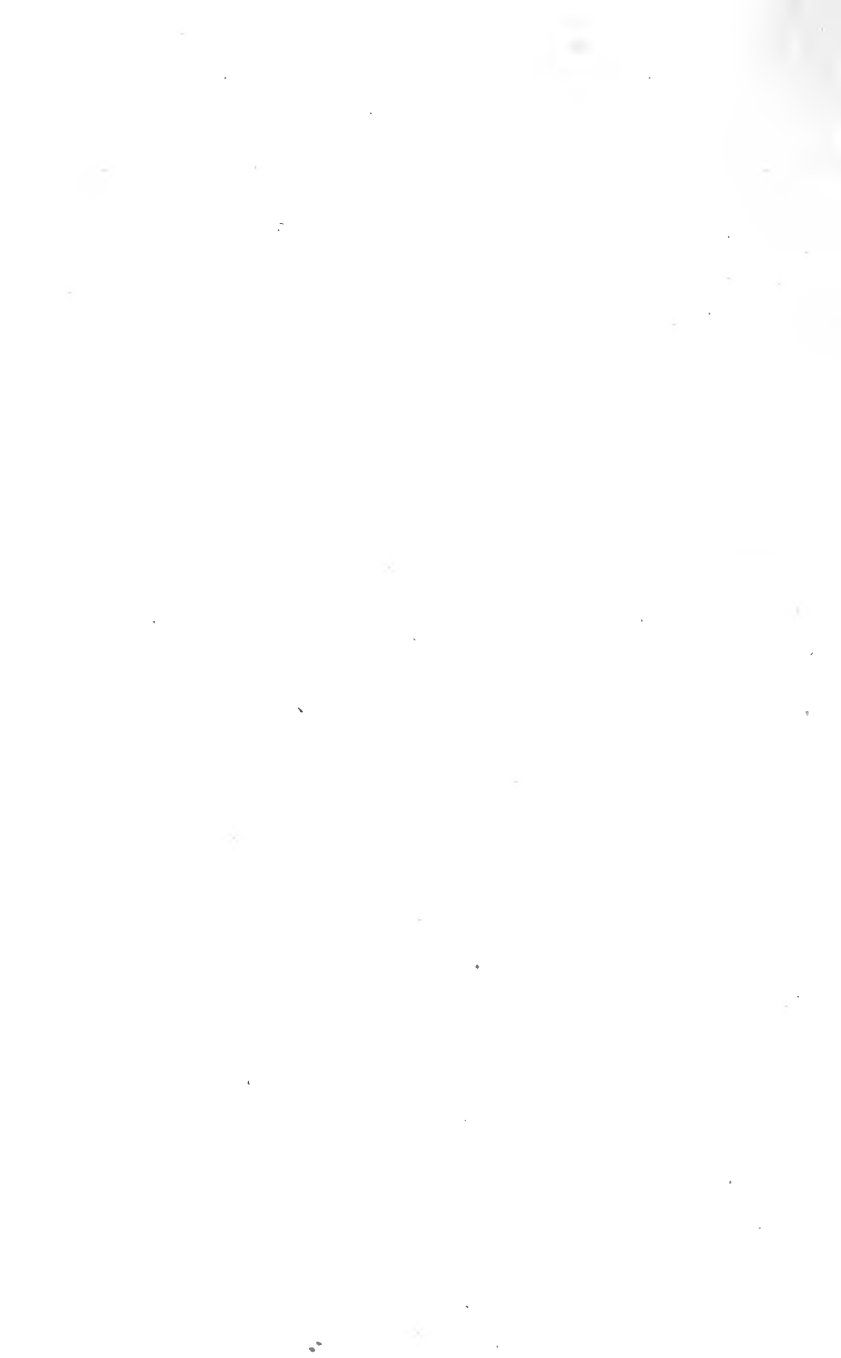
“All of a sudden that cat stops short, an’ he shoves up his back as high as my haid, an’ his tail gets loike a feather duster, an’ he pushes his face right against mine an’ he says:

“‘Jim, you and I is all alone heah.’

“An’ I says: ‘Doan let that worry you. I’s gwine to leave right now.’

“An’ I lef’, an’ when I fell down in the tin cans an’ bushes in that front yard, a big buck nigger is there, an’ he says to me, ‘Jim, you sho’ly am a fas’ runner,’ an I see he had the haid of a gray-haired white man under his arm, an’ I says, ‘Sir, I ain’t begun to run yet,’ an’ I didn’t stop till I got to the feed stable back of the hotel, an’ slam de door.”

We used to believe that story, and Jim told it so often that I’m sure he did too.



## CHAPTER VIII.

“SLOP” MARSHALL, BILLPOSTER STUMP,  
ET AL.

THE next citizen—I had almost said institution—to claim our greetings and our interest was “Slop” Marshall, the town scavenger. There were, of course, others of similar occupation, but they performed no useful function like to his, for they trafficked only in gossip and scandal.



“Slop” Marshall

“Slop” carried the waste from the old town’s kitchens to his hogs, housed in store-box shacks under the cemetery hill, and the unsavory odors of his establishment assured him the required privacy for his peculiar methods of slaughtering his swine and manufacturing horseradish.

Moreover, he was the town seer and necromancer, always prophesying and always explaining the failure of his prophecies. One who pretends a mastery of the occult is always fascinating to boys.

“Slop” Marshall believed the cure for human ills to lie in a pocketful of what he called scarabs—flat, polished, oval substances like seashore pebbles. And he claimed the power to make them work for him. To him, indeed, the “scarab” was the sought-for philosopher’s stone, which might cure warts, wens and goiters, rheumatism and kindred ailments.

Once, though, “Slop” confided to me that his “scarabs” were nothing more than Irish potatoes, carried in the pocket until they shrank and dried and took from dirty hands the desired polish. Of course, I tried his recipe, and, despite the ridicule of parents, brothers, sisters and friends, I carried a big potato in my pocket. It shrank, at last, to the dimensions of “Slop’s” “scarabs,” and its firmness, contours and polish corresponded. What ills it spared me I have never known.

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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We bade Marshall our boyish good morning, just as John Martin Luther Stump—we called him John Martin Luther Buffalo Bill Poster Stump—hailed us from across the street with the offer of a job. He was the town bill-poster and news magnate, and he wanted help in distributing hand-bills. We could have had gallery seats for our work, but we knew our parents might not approve the show, and, besides, it was our busy day.



John Martin Luther Stump

Next, on the steps of the Tourner home, we waved to pretty Ella Tourner, chatting with Professor McConville, the new schoolteacher, and peeped over the great stone wall before Governor Latta's home to pass the time of day with Maude and Bertie Latta, whom we thought fairer than any of the flowers to be found in the great yard.

Across the street old Sammy Stump was raising a dust as he swept down the steps of the Reformed Church.

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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Doctor Towne, the first and only homeopathic physician in the old town, came tiptoeing out of his office next door, and hastened up the street in his unmistakable, quiet, ladylike way. He seemed to us always a peaceable, timid sort, but he had weathered the violent opposition of his allopathic brethren, even as, in more recent years, the scientists (so called), the osteopaths, the electrotherapists and chiropractors have managed to survive.



Doctor Towne

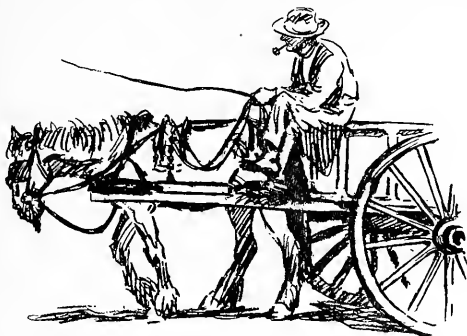
“Of thee I sing.  
Land where my fathers died,  
Land of the Pilgrims’ pride,  
From every mountain-side  
Let freedom ring.”

“Roll” Patterson, the carpenter, was singing in his big, clear voice from the roof of Judge Logan’s house, and he set us whistling. “Roll” led the Methodist Church choir, and he always sang at his work. You could hear him for half a block. His cheerfulness and his recognized strength and fineness of character were known all round about the old town.



## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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Jim Biggs

But we hurried on—past Widow Eagan's home (she who was kill-joy to the boys, because she always put ashes on their coasting-course), and met Jim Biggs, green-goggled, weak-eyed, doddering, driving his plodding gray horse and two-wheeled cart filled with limestone chunks for street repair.

The crew that followed Jim might have been recruited from the Old Men's Home. There was San Zimmerman, the boss, directing stiff-legged Tommy Gill, Corporal Hock, old and halt and big, and peg-legged Johnny Quinn.



Tommy Gill

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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Any day from early spring to late fall one might find this gang on the streets, always busy.



Peg-legged Johnny  
Quinn

Corporal Hock, rugged and of the most soldierly bearing, was the old town's hero. Back in the thirties, when a young daredevil, he had gone down to Texas, joined Gen. Sam Houston's band, had a share in the battle of San Jacinto, seen the capture of Santa Ana.

He came home in time to tell strange stories of the old Southwest, of thrilling exploits in Texas and Old Mexico and of the trials and sufferings, discouragements and triumphs, of the little group of patriots who made Texas truly American. His story proved the inspiration which sent many of the young men of the town to enlist in the real Mexican War a few years later.



Corporal Hock

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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This was the section of the old street where the lawyers and the 'squires had their offices. Attorney Joseph Johns was standing in front of his, eagerly reading the Pittsburgh paper. Which reminds me—

In those days a Chicago broker cornered the wheat market, and boosted prices from 65 cents to 70, from 70 to 80, and at last to the dollar mark for the first time in American history. Every one in the old town, and, I suppose, in the country, was talking of dollar wheat. Johns read of it as he stood in front of his office, just as on my day of days.

Just then Chris Crisby came hobbling up the street, with a little American flag pinned on his coat lapel. Crisby had seen many ups and downs in life—mostly downs. He was a member of many lodges, from most of which he received financial aid and other material assistance. He was just the man to whom dollar wheat meant all loss and no gain. He stepped up to Lawyer Johns.

"Joe," he said, "I am feeling mighty proud this morning, and I wear this flag

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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of red, white and blue in honor of dollar wheat."

Lawyer Johns looked him up and down.

"Chris," said he "you remind me of Benedict Arnold, when I think of your family. He called his attendants, when he came to die, and asked them to bury him in the American flag. Dollar wheat means about as much to you as the flag did to Arnold."

Crisby at once hobbled away from there.

We might have stopped, then, to play ball in the street with Geary Logan and Danny Carpenter, but we preferred some "Indian cigars" which "Skinny" brought down from the catalpa-trees in front of the Armstrong and Singer homes.

Old 'Squire Carpenter sat in the big armchair before his office, fanning the flies with a palm-leaf. He watched "Spider" Weinsheimer coaxing little black Lewis Nimmey to sing. We paused to listen.

Lewis sang "My Old Kentucky Home," and sang it well. I wonder, now, how that little Lew, who sang there in

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the sunlight, could have come, years afterward, to poison his parents.

He died in the Pennsylvania State Prison.

We crossed the street, the song done, ostensibly to talk with Grandmother Gray, but really because we hoped for a glimpse of her pretty granddaughter Lizzie, who was the most attractive cross-eyed girl I ever hoped to see. The very imperfection in her vision enhanced her beauty.

She wasn't there, but a dilapidated wagon, drawn by an animated skeleton of a horse, urged to a snail's pace by the entreaties of the owner, claimed our attention. It was Ben Myers, the ragman, and he walked on the curb beside, bawling out in the tones every boy in town could mimic:

"Cash for ra-a-a-a-g-g-s-s-s, o-o-ll ir-n, metal an' gold—if you gives 'em to me. Who's got any r-a-a-a-g-g-s-s?" and more of the same.



Ben Myers



## CHAPTER IX.

THE JUSTICE OF THE PEACE, THE BAKER AND  
RETIRED FARMER—THE TOWN SQUARE  
AND A FEW ECCENTRIC CITIZENS.

**A**NOTHER justice of the peace—as the county-seat, our town had many of them—old 'Squire Detar, came meandering up the street as we quit Grandma Gray's. He saluted us as we halted before Kuth's confectionery and bakeshop, from the interior of which came an alluring fragrance.

Kuth was the most irritable man in town, and every boy remembers the night we put tick-tacks on his windows.

We had it arranged so that the heavy nail swung a foot or so below the upper sash, and the operating end of the string led across the street to the hole under 'Squire Detar's office. All evening long the elderly Kuth rushed furiously into the street, held animated converse with him-

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self, looked vainly up and down, and returned to his neglected business.

Every boy in town was happy then.



Alex Trimble

We halted for a moment to greet old Alex Trimble, who was the most persistent talker in town. Alex was a retired farmer, who had moved into town to end his days in comfort, and he had a phenomenal fund of big words, which he invariably misused.

Alex was the man who once told a neighbor, who met him at the drugstore door, that he had just bought a piece of chemise (chamois) with which to polish his top buggy. Again, when a woman of the old town promenaded the main street leading a ridiculous little pug-dog he told his friends that his wife had always wanted "one of them plug dogs, so she could go lemonading down the street."

It's the truth whether you believe it or not.

Here we came to what the old town called the Square—the intersection of the



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two principal streets, on which fronted McQuaid's Hotel, two grocery stores and "Hen" Welty's general store, which sold everything from toothpicks to hay-wagons. "Hen," indeed, was accustomed to boast that, given time, he could supply a customer with anything from a paper of pins to a horse or a threshing-machine.

Before the McQuaid Hotel young John McQuaid was parading back and forth in the uniform of his military school. We just had to admire him, he was such an upstanding sort of a fellow, and as we did so, a man, who always reminded me of a snapping-turtle, came out into the yard.

It was James Porter Kinard, an eccentric, who was indeed an institution in the old town. Kinard was always sampling whisky over the several bars of the corporation, and, whenever he was properly mellowed, he stopped all he met to tell them two stories, the only two he



John McQuaid

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was ever known to tell. The better he felt, the oftener he told the stories.

They were old then, and they are fifty years older now. The first concerned the time he got on the train at Rodebaugh Station, and pretended to go to sleep. When the conductor nudged him and demanded his ticket, the passenger blinked and protested that he had none.



James Porter  
Kinard

“The conductor told me I’d have to get off at Greendale,” said Jimmy, with his snapping-turtle smile, “and I told him that was jes’ exactly where I wanted off.”

The other had to do with politics, and he pointed it according to the political faith of the auditor and his expectation of a drink. It was the story about getting stuck in a hole in a sycamore-tree after a rainstorm, and remembering that once he had voted the Democratic ticket.

“I felt so small then,” said Jimmy, “that I jes’ naturally shriveled up and crawled out a knothole.”

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It was James Porter Kinard's boast that this story always won him the desired drink.

Old Billy McQuaid was entertaining guests and fellow-townsmen on the porch of his hotel, and in the bar-room "Dutch" Chris, the ape-faced barber, whose fondness for the cornet, to the growing annoyance of the neighbors, was hurting his trade, gossiped with "Hi-Po-Lou" Myers, the gentlemanly barkeep. Neither was ever busy at that hour.

Jake Kettering joined the group then.

Jake—and every town has his like—was the "champeen fiddler" of city and county and the mainstay of Newingham's Light Parlor Orchestra, which supplied music for the elite dances, as well as for the revels of maid-servants and their friends.

In winter the maids held their dances in Cope's Hall, and in summer they adjourned to Katty's Grove. We boys always thought it worth the journey to hear Jake play the violin, his heavy foot marking time, his strident voice cleaving the thick, acrid smoke and the confusion

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of the crowded hall as he bawled the changes in "Money Musk" and "Virginia Reel."

He was a humorist by instinct, and his instructions to the dancers were always interlarded with jokes and jibes which put new energy into lagging feet. Men like Jake Kettering never live in vain. Their contributions to the gayety of life count for too much.

He has been gone for thirty years, where all good fiddlers go.

### QUADRILLE.

Balance all around the hall,  
Salute your partner, eyes all bright.  
First couple out, and lead to the right,  
Ladies in the center, and gents all right.  
Two and four, and two come down,  
Gents in the corner and seven hands round.  
Do so do, around your beau—  
Gents sashay and ladies wait.  
Swing your partner off the floor,  
Swinging them like you're swinging on a gate.  
Quick grand change—  
Promenade all and bow to the floor.  
Ladies in center and hands all round,  
Roosters in center and four hands round,  
Ala man all  
Around the hall.

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In those days the sanitary condition of the town was bad. There were no sewers; there was no water-supply system; people were absent-minded in their disposition of garbage, of ashes and refuse, tin cans, old mackerel kits, discarded hoop-skirts. These things accumulated in every back yard.

Every other family kept its horse or cow, pigs or chickens, and paid no attention to the matter of cleanliness in stables or pens. A sour, compelling odor pervaded all parts of the town, a continuing offense to sensitive nostrils—and the filth bred innumerable flies.



Billy McQuaid

McQuaid's Hotel was a great hatchery for flies, and Billy McQuaid's favorite outdoor sport was swatting them. His was a fearful and ingenious method. He would sit in his favorite chair on the broad porch, and allow the flies to hold convention on his right trouser leg, from hip to knee. Then

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down came his broad hand, and such flies as were imprisoned were rubbed up and down until crushed.

Each fly convention was larger than the one before—ten flies coming to each funeral, as the saying ran—and old Billy spent hours in this unlovely sport. When he walked abroad the sunlight glistened upon the lethal spots.

Those were the days, indeed, when the fly was the bane of the housewife, and her efforts to keep them—not from the house, but from the food—were futile and unending. Every house had its fly-swatters—strips of paper bound to sticks—and before each meal the mother or daughter or son would make the rounds of the dining-room, fluttering the papers and striving to drive out the pesky insects. And behind every picture were stuck great sprigs of asparagus, for we believed in those days that flies regarded asparagus sprays as the most desirable of resting-places.

Already the old town's congress of "Never Sweats" was in session at the corners. The men who neither toiled nor spun, but who debated and analyzed and

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reached decision on every State, national and world problem, were in early session, on curb, and bench, box and barrel. The village blacksmith held the floor.

He may have been telling of George and the red-hot iron, of dollar wheat or President Grant's third term. It was all one. He had an audience.

From Courthouse Alley came boys' voices shrieking "Caw-caw-caw." Henry Frees, the ashman, was their butt. He came along the alley, swaying on his driver's seat behind his bone-yard horses, straightening up now and again to cut viciously at the team with a stubby whip, then wobbling as the wobbly-wheeled wagon wobbled, in defiance of all the laws of gravitation. "Hen" was always pretty limber when he came out of the tavern, but none of us had seen the day—though we all looked forward to it—when he was catapulted from his throne.



Gypsy

Just then the gypsies crossed Main Street. They were here upon one of their annual visits.

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For some days a caravan of these wanderers had been encamped in Miller's Woods, east of Courthouse Square. As usual, these queer people did not fail to arouse the keenest interest among the boys and the loafers' congress.

They looked like brigands, anyhow, and their vari-colored garments, draped in the Romany styles of generations past, made them still more outlandish. The black-eyed, black-haired women of the tribe wandered about, selling beads, offering to tell fortunes while on pilgrimage, while the men folk, with violin and accordion, entertained the populace. The caravan was on the move, but its professional horse-traders were out to fleece some one before they quit the town.

The chief conveyance in the gypsy train was a gaudily painted covered wagon, representing a house on wheels, which was drawn by a pair of well-groomed horses, the pick of the herd, which pranced under glittering and bespangled harnesses. A strapping, swarthy fellow drove, and beside him sat a woman fit to be queen of the tribe. Behind, in the wagon-



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box, half a dozen half-clad youngsters were making merry.

A brace of grayhounds, more wagons and a collection of horses, ponies and mules completed the train.



## CHAPTER X.

THE BIGGEST NOSE IN GREENDALE—MARCUS  
CANDEE, THE LAWYER—BROWN'S  
DRUGSTORE AND DOC  
ANAWALT.

WE paused at the next alley to give right of way to little Johnny Wilt-rout, who came by with the little red cart which he trundled all day long through the byways and highways of the town. We passed the time of day with him, too, for we had just learned his occupation, which had long been a mystery to us. Johnny was at once coroner and undertaker to all the dogs and cats in town.

“Big Jim” Wells stood in front of the “Argus” office talking to Jim Laird, assistant editor. Jim was a giant physically, and he had real brains, but the town could never understand why, with all his talents, he tried, year in and year out, to consume several men’s shares of ardent

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spirits. Jim, indeed, admitted freely that he was four or five barrels over into the other fellow's allowance.



Jim Wells

Jim had the largest, reddest, noisiest nose in town, a veritable "rum blossom," which bloomed by day like a General Jack rose, and by night, as the jest ran, had a phosphorescent glow. It was a cauliflower proboscis, as famed in Westmoreland County as was Cyrano's in Gascony. Yet Jim's excesses never dulled his wit.

Once an inquisitive old maid—it would be neither prudent nor gracious to give her name—asked him what made his nose so red, and Jim retorted instantly:

"It is only blushing with pride at its decency in keeping out of other people's business."

That night the whole town, from the loafers' congress to the congenial crew in McQuaid's bar-room, was laughing over Jim's response. His nose never lost its luster nor the jest its savor.

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Across the way a group of pretty girls edged toward the curb to give sea-room to Corrigan Whistler, the town cobbler, who had all sail spread, far more than three sheets in the wind, and whose language was that of Peter Simple's "Chips," the sea-going carpenter. On our side we made way for the old town's prototype of "Lawyer Marks," who required almost as much room to navigate.

It was Marcus Candee, Esq., who had once written to the village editor, rebuking him mildly for omitting the "Esq." in some informal mention of his name. Candee was tall and straight, but shambling-gaited, and he always appeared in pouter-pigeon white shirt, slightly soiled, small black tie, black frock coat and strapped trousers and chin whiskers. He wore always a stove-pipe hat, so tall it seemed to rise to meet the sun.



Marcus Candee, Esq.

Marcus was a lawyer by profession, a tippler by habit, and, by way of other distinction, Jim Borlin's star

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boarder. Borlin ran the Laird House; a whole-souled sort of a man, quick in his judgment of other men, and a rapid-fire talker.

His good nature and his unfailing generosity did not help him in his business. His hotel was always full of loafers, eating his meals and occupying his rooms, and paying only by oral promises and scrawled I. O. U.'s. The old town recalled the day when Jim complained bitterly to a friend because of Candee's failure to pay.

"Jim," was the response, "why do you let him hang around, then?"

"Just for his blarney, his blarney, his eternal blarney," was the reply.

Next stood Brown's drugstore, and Brown's drugstore was always of interest to boys. There one might buy for a price licorice stick and licorice root, coughdrops and rock-candy, horehound stick candy, and, best of all, soda water.

Brown kept the one soda fountain in town, a single, stationary, silver goose-neck siphon, set on a little white marble slab, and above it a glass sphere, the in-

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terior of which was automatically sprayed by the soda water. The device had a sizzling, but wintry, sound when in operation. Flavors were limited to strawberry, lemon, vanilla and sarsaparilla, and the soda water was the plainest of soda water, but strong in effervescence.

No boy, of that generation at least, can forget his first drink of soda water; how tenderly and shyly he held the big, silver-handled glass; how slowly and carefully he lifted it to his lips; how the bubbles broke to spray his nostrils and to make him sneeze with the first swallow; how the tears came, and after these the laughter.

There was one other attraction at this store—the free almanacs which always interested the boys. The front cover always displayed a naked man, with his stomach cut open and his viscera exposed—“innards,” we always said—and about the margin were grotesque figures representing the signs of the Zodiac. I can remember them still—Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Virgo, Scorpio, Capricorn and the rest.

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And the almanac, along with its advertised cure-alls for every human ailment, was a sure cure for the blues. There were jokes innumerable, suggestions for charades, riddles, puzzles, tricks, puns, short courses in legerdemain, ventriloquism, mesmerism. Of course, there were astonishing testimonials too.

One thing about the old store always puzzled us. The professional men of the town passed frequently behind the prescription case, and they always came out wiping their moustaches, coughing and smelling of cardamons.



Edwin Boice

Edwin Boice's general store was our next port of call, a quaint little place, with two steps leading to the entrance and one small display window filled with fruit-jars of old-fashioned stick candy, licorice, mixed confections, paper-covered kisses and penny cakes of maple sugar.

We knew Edwin's penchant for old newspapers, which he used in wrapping packages, and hurried across the street to



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Rock & Rankin's cigar-store to get some. Before the store, of course, was a wooden Indian, hatchet in hand, big enough to frighten horses in the street. Rankin knew us, so we went back of the counter, collected a bundle of papers, folded them neatly, and returned to Boice's. We got four cents in trade, and, after sampling the cracker barrels, the little black prunes, dried currants and raisins, took four "blind robins."

On the way out we saw little Benny Dick, the tailor, sitting cross-legged in his shop across the way, plying the needle busily. Dick, as we best remember him, was the proud possessor of a cow of wondrous size and shape, with head, tail and body of normal size, but legs so short that the body nearly touched the ground, and the tail dragging behind like a stabilizer.

Doctor Anawalt passed then, and chucked us each under the chin as he climbed into his buggy while Pat Condon, his driver, quieted the spirited horses worrying at their bits. Dr. Anawalt was physician to the old town's leading fam-

ilies, a fastidious dresser, always in immaculate linen, with boots most brightly polished.

He was ostentatious in manner, with a dignified stride, but very moderate in his charges and altogether sympathetic, kind and devoted to his patients. What Irvin Cobb said of doctors in general—"he is with us when we come into the world and with us when we go out of it, often lending a helping hand on both occasions"—did not apply in its entirety to him.



Dr. Anawalt

He radiated hopefulness; his optimism was contagious, a mixture of faith and of imagination, which seemed to buoy up the spirits of his patients. He never pulled a long face; he did not deal in cautious, mournful words. His bitter medicines were always more effective than those of his less fortunate rivals.

## THE VILLAGE DOCTOR.

Along the village streets, where maples lean  
Together like old friends about the way,  
A faithful pair oft and anon were seen—  
He and his nag, both growing old and gray;  
What secrets lurked within the old soul's breast,  
Of mother-love, of throbs of pains and ills,  
All safely kept beneath that buttoned vest,  
Receptacle of powders and of pills.  
Thrice happy he when some fond mother's eyes  
Grew moist with love unspeakable to find  
Snugged to her breast her babe, whose paradise  
Within her soul and bosom were entwined.  
How oft he held the wrist to mark the slow  
Pulsations of the feebly fluttering heart,  
While his kind words, soft murmuring and low,  
Essayed to calm the mourner's pain and smart.  
He was to all a father, brother, friend;  
Their joys were his, their sorrows were his own.  
He sleeps in peace where yonder willows bend  
Above the violets that kiss the stone.

—*Horace S. Keller, in New York Sun.*



## CHAPTER XI.

SURVEYOR CLARKE WARDEN AND THOMAS  
BARCLAY, THE BANKER.

**S**EATED among the Oliver chilled plows, harrows and assorted farm implements which cluttered the front of Turney Brothers' hardware store were Clarke Warden and John Gaylord, who can not be slighted here. They were among the town's notables.

Both were "Forty-niners," who had trekked to California in the days of the gold rush, and had brought back enough of yellow metal to keep them in comfort for the rest of their days. They brought back, too, enough good stories to last a generation. No less contented with his lot was Thomas Barclay, banker and Mexican War veteran, who sat in his brown linens on the front porch of his little bank, and hung his number twelves over the porch rail.

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I remember going once to Barclay's bank with my mother, at a time in the nation's history when gold was at a premium. Mother had accumulated several hundred dollars in gold while living in the oil regions, and, now that gold coin was in demand, she thought to change it into paper and add to the family's available cash.

Mr. Barclay was a big man physically, and he did everything in a big way, even to the raising of a big family. His little banking-room was barren of elaborate furnishings, equipped only with a plain deal table and a few cheap, but substantial, chairs. He kept his money in a little closet off the room.

He counted out mother's gold, figured on the back of an envelope, explained in detail how much in greenbacks she would receive in exchange, and retired to his closet. He came out with a little wooden chest, which, as it seemed to me, contained about all the money in town. He counted out the bills, gave them to mother, and escorted us to the door. Still warmed by his cheerful good day, I looked back as

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we passed up the street. He had resumed his favorite posture, feet over the rail, as he might be seen every day from early spring to late fall.

Clarke Warden? There were few men in the old town whose contributions to its life and thought were more valuable. Old-time schoolmaster, surveyor of repute, claim adjuster and expert on matters of railroad right of way, he had deserved prosperity, but his interest in material things was only casual.

Warden had a hobby—astronomy. He seemed to have a personal affection for every star in the heavens. He was a true nature lover, too, and it was worth any boy's while, or man's, to stroll with him in the woods at any season, and to hear him name the trees and flowers, birds and animals, and to explain the intimate details of their struggles for existence. He could interpret animal life, and such interpretation must interest every normal soul.

Twenty years ago I had a share in building a new town and several miles of railway, and my men used in vain all their powers of persuasion to secure rights-of-

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way through two or three farms. We were almost ready for the courts when I thought of old Clarke Warden, and I sent for him.

He was well on toward eighty, yet mentally and physically fit, and he responded without delay. Within three days he was an accepted boarder of the most troublesome farmer in the rights-of-way squabble and within three days more he had closed the deal at a price satisfactory to every one concerned.

At that time I had many opportunities to visit with him, and to drive him through the most beautiful parts of northern Ohio, and often we were delayed far into the night. He had been the first person to interest me in the out-of-doors. He was the first, then, to show me the wonders of the stars, and make them real to me; to name over the brighter and more notable of them, to tell the stories which belonged to them, and all this without excess of figures or fact or scientific learning.

The interest he roused in me led to the exploration of bookstores as a preliminary



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to the exploration of the stars, and I found what I wanted. The first clear, cold November evening that I sat down to read, the desire to see what I had read about drove me outdoors continually, and I stalked the lawn looking for Sirius. The policeman on that beat, suspicious of my movement, watched me from behind a tree for half an hour and then threatened my arrest. I had trouble enough persuading him that I belonged in that yard and that house—and then he told me, politely enough, that he thought me crazy.



## CHAPTER XII.

### THE STATION STORE, COURTHOUSE SQUARE AND NICKNAMES.

**B**UT back to the Main Street. "Skinny" suggested that we go to the station and get some ice-cream, and the suggestion was enough. Jersey Taylor, who had driven us from his ice pond hours before, kept the little confectionery store at the station, and he alone dealt in ice-cream. His monopoly in ice, the artificial product being unknown, gave him the advantage over every possible competitor.

He controlled the oyster market also, and he was the first dealer to bring bananas to town, selling them at five cents apiece. It was a great day when first we boys got five cents together to buy one, and then divided it with slippery fingers to make it go around. Of course they were juicy morsels for us.

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Railway Station

We were glad to learn, as we ate our cream, that Jersey had not recognized us at the pond. He had a long memory.

Holiday games were in full swing when we returned to the street. We were just at the north reach of Courthouse

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Square, and the wooden benches along the stone wall were filled by the usual Saturday group of idlers. Just round the corner Hare's photograph gallery was busy, as it always was on Saturday.

Six boys made up the backbone of an "All On" game, contending with six more "jumpers" on the other side. The amateurs all halted for the moment when Frank Buckalew Lohr, the town athlete, stopped to watch. He had just returned from a season tour with a one-ring circus, and, of course, his presence compelled respect.



Leap Frog

Then there were others busy at "Fox and Geese," "Bumblebee," "Lame Soldier," "Crack the Whip," "Blanke-Lie-Low," "Leap Frog," "Mumblety Peg" and "King's Stick." Some of these games were good, clean sport, healthy for body and soul, but not all. When I remember the popularity of "Lame Soldier," and the role of the boy who was

the "Stirrup," when I consider parts of "Fox and Geese" as we played it, I can not but be less enthusiastic about some of the sports of childhood.

And that reminds me of the celebrated ball game which the old Westmoreland ball club played at Adamsburg the day of the big fight. There was disagreement about the umpiring and the score, and before the contest was over the town constable was forced to call upon the citizens to arrest the disturbers of the peace. These law-abiding citizens answered the call with alacrity, arrested several of the boys of our town, and that night shipped them back to Greendale.

The trip was made with the boys locked in a butcher's wagon, their pale and troubled faces looking out through the apertures of a big calf-crate. They stayed in jail most of the next day, until friends or relatives could bail them out. This ball club boasted uniforms of muslin flagging, with stripes running up and down the legs and round the waist, and stars glistened in the seats of the trousers.

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The boys who played these games, with few exceptions, had nicknames given them by fond and loving parents, or by brothers and sisters. Names thus given usually were conferred as a mark of respect or distinction. Not so the familiar names given to them by their boy companions and playmates. Derision or contempt usually prompted the designations given by the playmates, suggested by some outstanding incident in their early lives, or some unfortunate physical characteristic that stimulated the habits, associations or principal features of beast or bird. Boys were no respecters of rank or person in conferring these "degrees," and usually the pseudo title clung to the youth, who bore it, closer than the baptismal name. Memory brings back a few of the nicknames of the boys in old Greendale fifty years ago, and some of the readers of these papers may have their own recollection quickened by this impressive list.

"Mushy" Seacrist, "Calamity" Williams, "Beanie" Hutchinson, "Snaky" Weaver, "Baldy" Bierer, "Blow" Coshey, "Sucker" Thompson, "Obbie" McClellan,

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“China” Keenan, “Vinegar” Armstrong, “Darby” Bierer, “Con” Barclay, “Brophy” Ulam, “Towhead” Dick, “General” Lyon, “Tit” Shrader, “Chickie” Hawk, “Dandy” Hill, “Dude” Fess, “Niffie” Graff, “Monkey” Cline, “Buck” Fisher, “Sennie” Turney, “Fatty” Robinson, “Red” Denman, “Shorty” Butterfield, “Jap” Lohr, “King” Bommer, “Montie” Null, “Duke” Goldsmith, “Pee” Kilgore, “Greaser” McCall, “Doggie” Murphy, “Crow” Weinsheimer, “Muffie” Kline, “Ching” Johnston, “Eck” Guffey, “Zebbie” Detar, “Squibbs” Greer, “Captain” Shaw, “Moze” Allison, “Tucker” Reamer, “Motie” Turney, “Judge” Clarke, “Brud” McCausland.

In cold print some of these names may appear to the casual reader to be vulgar; not so with the citizens of the “old burg”—none gave thought to vulgarity or revealed the least embarrassment in speaking the name of such boys as “Stinker” Dorn, “Tit” Shrader or “Pee” Kilgore. These boys were my playmates, and, ghostlike, their old familiar faces, peculiarities and characteristics stand out be-



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fore me as I write their names. There is a life story in every name. Some have achieved great success; others died in glorious youth or early manhood—a few, alas! have traversed the path which led to destruction—yet to me they were the finest, squarest, whole-souled fellows I have ever known, and so shall they always be in my memory.

The moments we spend in living over these mellowing adventures of youth repay us in hours of renewed ecstasy and spirit, for they reunite us with the dear old days of long ago.

Well, some are in the churchyard laid,  
Some sleep beneath the sea,  
But none are left of our old class,  
Excepting you and me;  
And when our time shall come, Tom,  
And we are called to go,  
I hope we'll meet with those we loved  
Some forty years ago.



## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE OLD SONGS, POLITICAL MARCHING CLUBS AND JOHN WELLS, HORSE- TRADER, AND OTHERS.

The Camptown ladies sing this song,  
Duda, duda;  
The Camptown races five miles long,  
Duda, duda, day.

THE games remind me of the old, old songs—songs we boys used to sing o' nights by way of serenade to none too tolerant citizens. We had always a fine assortment of ballads, popular in that generation.

There were "Suwanee River;" "Bring Back My Bonnie to Me;" "Tenting on the Old Camp-ground;" "Mocking-bird;" "Silver Threads Among the Gold;" "Hard Times Come Again No More;" "The Old Oaken Bucket;" "Ben Bolt;" "Annie Laurie;" "When the Corn Is Gently Waving, Annie Dear;" "Good Night, Ladies;"

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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“Glory, Glory, Hallelujah;” “Billy Boy;”  
“Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep;”  
“Come Where My Love Lies Dreaming;”  
“Roll On, Silver Moon;” “In the Evening  
by the Moonlight;” “Dixie;” “Marching  
through Georgia;” “Swing Low, Sweet  
Chariot;” “The Last Rose of Summer;”  
“Old Black Joe;” “Home, Sweet Home;”  
“Whoa, Emma, You Put Me in Quite a  
Dilemma;” “O Susanna;” “Nelly Bly,”  
and no doubt a score more which my  
memory misses.

And I believe that these deserved their popularity. Oddly enough, the songs of that generation do survive, as those of the past twenty years have failed to do. I would not undertake to guess the answer unless it be that the music was more deserving.

Most of the popular songs of the present generation are mere adaptations of Moody and Sankey hymns, translated into ragtime, and holding all the yearning of the gospel melody. The songs of our day were those, no doubt, which supplied the rhythms and the melodies for the revivalists.

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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### THE OLD SONGS.

WILL M. MAUPIN.

Sweet songs of old! How memory brings  
Their music back to me  
Until each bell of heaven rings  
Salvation full and free!

"Joy to the world," the music sweet  
Has filled a million souls,  
And marked the time for marching feet  
To where old Jordan rolls.

"I need Thee ev'ry hour," for I  
Oft weary by the way;  
And "While the years are rolling by"  
Thou art my guide and stay.  
"Abide with me" through calm and stress,  
Protect me by Thy might;  
My weak and falt'ring footsteps bless  
With Thine own "Kindly light."

The dear old songs! Their echoes fill  
The quiet evening air;  
They bid me bear life's load until  
"There'll be no sorrow there."

"By cool Siloam's shady rill,"  
Whose water floweth free,  
Lead me each day and night until  
"Nearer, my God, to Thee."

And when "On Jordan's stormy banks"  
My feet shall stand at last;  
When I shall see the ransomed ranks  
From whom all care is cast—

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“O there may I, though vile as he”  
Christ did that day behold,  
The city’s walls of jasper see  
And walk its streets of gold.

The marching clubs, somehow, seem in the same class. In those days every boy thought autumn wasted if he could not parade with those of his father’s political faith. In those days, in Greendale, the Republicans and Democrats used to parade on alternate nights, when campaign excitement grew high, each trying to outdo the other party in enthusiastic numbers.

Every man or boy who could be persuaded to tramp the dusty streets was pressed into service, supplied with a cap, a glistening oilcloth cape which rivaled Joseph’s coat, white leggings and a vile-smelling torch bound on a stick as long as a broom-handle. They marched thus in squads and battalions, headed by gaily uniformed bands or drum corps, torches flaming and everybody shouting himself hoarse.

These torches were stored always in the courthouse basement, where they con-

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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tributed much to the general fire risk. There were such clubs in every town and village, and they traveled from town to town to participate in this or that political rally or celebration, often blocking the railway yards with the denseness of the traffic. Campaigns were real fun in those days.

To-day, with every voter card-indexed, with the vote by ward and precinct tabulated as a basis for estimate and endeavor, politics has lost its charm.

. . . . .  
“Skinny” and I stopped next to play audience at a political debate staged on the curb by ’Squire Marsh, Lawyer Dave Harvey and John Wells, horse-dealer and all-round sportsman. They shifted their places as little Oliver Sarvey, bell-boy for Andy Bovard’s hotel, swept off the front walk.

John Wells was the most interesting of the three, so far as we were concerned. He was a strapping, husky-whiskered, ungainly soul, with an absorbing delight in draw poker. But it never worried his wife.

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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A woman of the neighborhood complained once to Mary Wells that her husband had lost his night key late one night, and had roused the family by bawling out for some one to let him in.

“Indeed,” said Mrs. Wells, “and that would never bother me. John never carried a night key. He does not need one, for some of us are always up when he comes home, and breakfast ready.”

The story ran that John came home one morning with his beard, shirt front and coat much stained with tobacco juice, and responded to his wife’s questioning by the illuminating statement that the cuspidor had been behind him, and that “those fellows I played with knew how to play poker.”

A farmer from Crab Creek Valley bolted down the stairway from Doctor Fisher’s office, and almost ran over us in his haste to get to the drugstore. The town doctors were dentists in those days, as well as general practitioners, and this farmer was spending his week-end having his teeth drawn, as a preliminary to the installation of a new set.



## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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The druggist led him behind the prescription counter and gave him something to relieve the pain, along with a stiff drink of brandy.

There was no real dentistry then, at least in towns of that size. When teeth began to go, the doctor removed them by strong-arm methods, using forceps of alarming weight and size. There were no local anæsthetics in those days. Whoever had a toothache must grin and bear it, or get himself supplied with those of the synthetic type.

We turned in at Amos Steck's bookstore to look over the yellow-backed dime novels—the "Skinny, the Tin Peddler," and "Jack Harkaway" series. Will Weaver, the clerk, slipped behind me, and held a lighted stogie to the back of my neck, and then asked me a question.

Of course, I stepped back, and got a nice, round blister as a token of his friendliness. We went away from there quickly, and slipped in at old Jaroslowsky's clothing-store. We did not go past the door.

The old merchant had never managed to make friends with the boys of the com-

munity. We always made it a point to stick our heads in at the doorway and to yell, "Jaros One Cent," assured that the words would bring the desired result.

As we raced down the street, the old man hurried to the sidewalk to shake his fist at our retreating figures. Once we had so angered him that he pursued us for a block. On the way back, meeting Jake Hacke, he complained volubly:

"Dot iss a bad lot of poys, und der Congressman's poy iss d' vorst of d' lot."

We had another way of teasing the old man. When we could find a boy green enough to run the risk, we used to give him a three-cent piece and send him to buy some "ready-made buttonholes." He usually came out much wiser, for old Jaros would catapult him out into the street to the accompaniment of staccato imprecations.

## CHAPTER XIV.

THE COURTHOUSE, THE GRAVESTONE CUTTERS, "THE LALLAPALOOSA," ET AL.

WE never passed the town pump in courthouse yard without stopping for a drink.

There were no individual drinking-cups in those days, for that generation had never heard of germs. We drank, instead, from a great tincup, chained to the pump handle, and never worried at all. Almost every boy and girl had a little bag of camphor and assafoetida tied about the neck, anyway, and that seemed insurance enough. We have all noticed how, when Spanish influenza spread like a medieval pestilence over the country, the mothers who were small girls forty years ago trusted again to that household preventive.

Court was in session, and what boy could pass the courthouse without looking in? We climbed the steps where Senator

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Edward Cowan was telling his latest story to a group of fellow-lawyers. It was said of the Senator that he would stop a lawsuit any time to tell a story.

That day the courtroom was filled with witnesses and spectators, and Judge Logan was on the bench. Behind him on the wall hung a life-size painting of a sad-faced woman, blindfolded and thinly clad. She held a pair of scales, which balanced none too well, the emblem of justice. There were other decorations hardly less amusing to irreverent boys—portraits of austere, funereal-looking old chaps, forgotten judges. Each held in his hands a scroll, which made one think they might carry tuberoses. There were portraits, too, of Daniel Webster, Henry Clay and other patron saints of the American bar.

We slipped into the back seats just as court opened. It was worth watching.

Court Crier George Weinsheimer strode to the rail which separated common folk from the lawyers, and shouted in a tone that disturbed the courtroom dust and the portraits of the fathers:

“Oh, yezz, oh, yezz—this Honorable Court is now open. Gentlemen of the jury will please draw near and answer when their names are called, then step forward to the bar.”

Tommy Poulson and Dave Weaver, war veterans and tipstiffs to the court, seated comfortably and conspicuously in the front row of the courtroom, arose, shook their walking-sticks mechanically, and cried in union:

“Order in the court. Order in the court.”

They never failed to do just that at the opening of court.

The clerk having called the roll of jurors, and each having received supplementary directions from the court crier to “step forward to the box,” the oath of office was administered with a speed and a mechanical finish that left no impression whatsoever on anybody’s mind. It was years before I ever learned that rigmarole which he recited so readily.

In those days the oath was administered as follows:

“You and each of you do solemnly swear, in the presence of almighty God, that you will well and truly try the matters in this case and give a true verdict, according to the evidence, so help you God.”

The formal swearing of the witness took this form:

The clerk addressed the witness with the old question, “How do you swear?” and the witness, standing, would either express desire to affirm or swear, and hold up his right hand while the clerk proceeded:

“Do you solemnly swear, in the presence of almighty God, the searcher of all hearts, that the testimony you shall give to the court and jury in this case shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth as you shall answer to God in the last great day?”

Little Alfie Smith, the court page, was flitting back and forth, carrying books and messages for the judge and the attorneys. We admired them, for the Hon. Henry D. Foster and “Beardy” Seward were both noted men and great lawyers in their day.

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We remembered the story, as everybody did, telling of the time when "Beardy" was examining a German witness with a view of determining to what extent the defendant in the case was under the influence of liquor. The witness was perfectly sure the aforesaid defendant was not drunk.



"Beardy" Seward

"How do you know?" questioned "Beardy," sharply. "Were you ever drunk?"

"No, sir-r, I nefer was."

"How many can you drink without getting drunk?" thundered "Beardy," thrusting his face close to the face of the witness.

"How many vot you means?" was the naive response. "Kegs?"

That witness was excused.

We did not wait to hear the case. We knew what lawsuits sounded like, and we knew, too, how court was closed. It was not worth our while to wait until Court Crier Weinsheimer hammered again with his gavel, and loudly announced:

“Oh, yezz, oh, yezz, this court is now adjourned until half-past nine Monday morning. God save the judge, the attorneys in this case, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and all the jury.” The call was always the same,

In those days men wore whiskers, and the face smooth shaven was rare indeed.



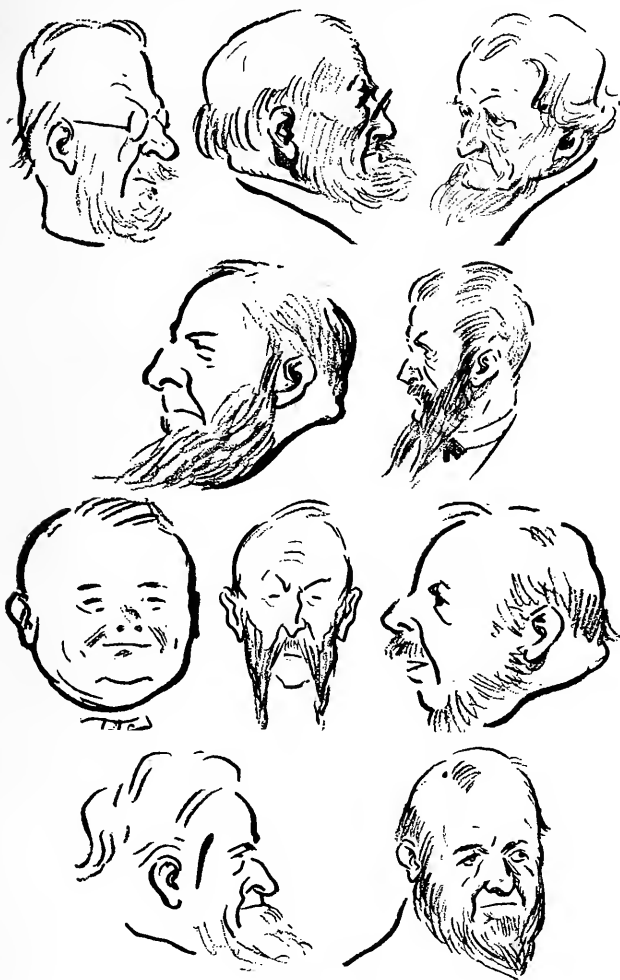
Just Whiskers

And the whiskers were luxuriant—full beards, “Burnsides” (named after the general), imperials. The men with beards seldom thought neckties necessary, and I often looked forward to the time when I, too, could economize on scarves and barbering; on laundered shirts, even. George Ade was surely right when he set down the thought that “a man might be born with a hair lip or a club foot, but his whiskers were his own.”



## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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Lawyers

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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For many years the big courtroom was the largest hall in town, and, naturally, the preferred setting for amateur theatricals, and for the county institutes.

Once I attended there an entertainment by Signor Blitz, mesmerist and prestidigitator, who gave the finest exhibition of slight-of-hand and hypnotism, supplemented by the performances of trained birds, that I have ever seen. There, too, I saw the great actress, Mme. Janauschek, and heard Francis Murphy, temperance lecturer, make an impassioned appeal for the signing of the pledge.

On these occasions, when we lacked the price of admission, it was the custom of the boys to club together for a single admission, and to send the first of the gang into the hall. This boy, as the room filled, would quietly raise a window and sit in it while another climbed through the outer lobby window to the roof of the south porch—startling the martens and pigeons from their roosts—and crawled along the foot-wide coping which some forgotten architect had extended around the building. There was a bad right angle

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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to turn, when the youngster risked a thirty-foot drop to the pavement below, but past that turn it was easy to reach the open window.

The saying ran then, as now, that a kind Providence watches over small boys and drunken men—and I can believe it. We boys were accustomed to tread that coping and to hop freight trains when chance afforded, but our greatest risk was in coasting on Academy Hill.

Six or seven to the bob, we would start at the crest and scoot right down the center of Main Street, flashing past frightened horses, wagons and farm sleds, past street intersection after intersection, to make an astonishing right-angle turn into Pittsburgh Street, and again downgrade past Kepler's carriage factory at the Jack's Run bridge.

A Bridge of Sighs—such structures are always called that—led from the courthouse over Jail Alley to the two-story out-building beyond. When one contrasts the cleanly, white-enameled conveniences of the public buildings of to-day, one can but admire the fortitude of the fathers.

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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Poor old Pete, the courthouse janitor, always "did his derndest" to keep the premises clean, but his was an uphill pull.



Old Pete

Pete was crippled of body and soured of soul. He was a big man, and he had a palsied leg, which he lifted or dragged along, two skips to the normal step of the good limb; and we boys, after the heartless manner of our kind, called him "Step-and-a-half." But we never badgered him if we found ourselves within his reach. His was of an uncertain temper.

As we left the courthouse, we passed "Big Jim" Carpenter, counselor at law, who was describing the eccentricities of a farmer client to a friend. The client, according to the yarn, could not agree with his wife's relatives. When they came to visit he took to the chicken-coop, as a matter of course, and lived there until they left, maintaining that "it wasn't warm, but it was peaceable."

The man, said "Big Jim," was so close that he would eat nothing but eggs while

his wife's family was about. Eggs, I should add, were three dozen for a quarter in those days.

"Skinny" and I heard this story, and then climbed the iron railing which surmounted the courthouse wall to look into the street. Loughrey Brothers, the town tombstone-cutters, were driving by with a load of headstones; their fat, red-cheeked little apprentices, "Stinker" Dorn and "Flop" Turney, perched like harpies on top of the load.

I had discovered in my schoolwork some facility in sketching, and I delighted to loaf about the tombstone shop watching the Loughreys chisel lambs and crosses, names and compliments, upon the polished marble. They used to let me practice making letters, lambs and crosses on paper, flattering my vanity by the promise of an apprenticeship once I was old enough. I know now that they were but having sport with me, but I must thank them still for the dreams that I should be some day a first-class tombstone-cutter, and, more than that, perhaps a great sculptor.

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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Jim Loughrey had a favorite story of the farmer, in deep mourning, who purchased a headstone which bore the legend, "The Light of My Life Has Gone Out," and who promptly married again.

Jim said—and in those days I believed him—that the farmer wanted the inscription changed lest it hurt the bride's feelings, and that he added to the epitaph the words: "But I Have Another Match."

Below us passed a quintette of pretty girls of our own age, and we tossed down



Lallapaloosa

buckeyes, which one (Becky) caught as handily as any boy. She flung us, in return, a bright red dahlia, and this I treasured all the day.

Behind them came other girls, older, and one of them (Kate Ulman) was the "lallapaloosa" of the time. I do not think I ever saw a prettier girl or one more charming in manner or disposition, a regular red-apple kind of girl, good to look at, and as wholesome as a girl might

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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be. I sometimes think that that kind grows no longer.

But even as she smiled up at us our attention was diverted from beauty to the beast. A horse and buggy passed at furious speed, and in the rig sat a big man muffled from head to foot in an enormous fur overcoat. We knew what that meant.

It meant that the wearer of the coat was very drunk indeed, but no one in that town could ever understand why fire-water within meant fur without in summer-time. We simply checked it off as another of the community's eccentricities.

Across the street the noonday crowd lined the curb from Dillon's grocery to the drugstore, and even the bookstore around the corner. It was made up of young attorneys, doctors and a few citizens in ordinary, some just returned from the boarding-house.

Wils Rightmire, the hatter, and the most inquisitive man in town, had joined



Fur Coat

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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the throng, and noticed that Lawyer Broucher wore a new hat. Wils lifted it from the lawyer's head, looked it over inside and out, and inquired abruptly:

"Where did you buy that hat? It's not good quality. I could have sold you a better for less."

We didn't hear Broucher's retort, but it must have been a comprehensive one, for everybody laughed as the hatter beat his retreat.



Laughing Joe McClain

From farther along the curb came a roar of distinctive laughter, and we looked up again to see a big, burly fellow, roughly dressed, who carried a stout hickory cudgel. He towered head and shoulders above the crowd, and his great mouth opened as he laughed in a way that simulated the bray of Wentling's burro. Then we knew that the woodsman, Joe McClain, was in from Dry Ridge, on one of his semi-annual visits to town.



## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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Just then we had to make way for the town engineer, who emerged from a hallway, followed by his rodman and chainmen, carrying a transit, flags and chain.



## CHAPTER XV.

SEAT OF THE POLITICAL SPELLBINDERS,  
"STUTTERING JOE," THE TOWN EDI-  
TORS AND JEWISH CLOTHIER.

ONE hundred feet south, at the highest point of the wall, among the pine-trees, was the rostrum from which the political spellbinders of the day held forth. There it was that I first heard James G. Blaine address a crowd which packed the square. There, too, the traveling fakirs and medicine men held forth whenever they visited the old town.

"Stuttering Joe" was coming down our side of the street with a playmate. Joe could whistle with any bird and swear with never the skipping of a syllable, but when he tried to articulate in ordinary speech, he missed fire like a balky motor-car.

Once, in school, the teacher sent him to the blackboard to parse a sentence be-

fore the grammar class, and he got nowhere. Professor Henrie, best of our instructors, called him sharply to account.

“Joseph,” he said, “I want you to get busy and parse that sentence. You stand there like a bump on a log. Get busy. I know you can do it if you put your mind to it.”

Joe tried to speak, and could not. Then, suddenly, in a voice as clear as a bell, he broke out with:

“I know —— well I can’t.”

Professor Henrie was astonished, but his astonishment did not lessen the speed with which he strode to one of the window shutters and drew from behind it a couple of long, villainous-looking rods. He grabbed Joe by the collar, jerked him around, and proceeded to give him a two-handed whipping that was a dandy. He wielded a rod with either hand, and after that whipping Joe never used another oath in the schoolroom.

Behind Joe the darkest-skinned white man I had ever seen was trundling a wheelbarrow up the highway. It was

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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"Old Black Baltimore Twist" Maynes, as we called him, for his underpinning resembled a plug of tobacco then much in favor.

The editors of the old town's rival papers passed, and, of course, they did not speak. Rival editors in towns that size seldom did in those days.

The editor of the "Tribune and Herald," high silk hat tilted back, the tails of his long black coat flapping, hurried past to avoid the necessity of addressing the editor of the "Argus," a stately, dignified old gentleman, wearing a cape and carrying a cane. No such restraint marked their editorial exchanges.

The elder editor, owner of the Democratic journal, had a playful habit of reaching out with his cane and either hooking or tap-



Baltimore  
Twist



Editor of Tribune

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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ping every boy he chanced to meet, always releasing him with a kindly remark and a friendly smile. Once, I remember, his



Editor of Argus

words to a playmate of mine made a lasting impression upon me.

He stopped us on the street to ask some question, and my companion was abashed by his attention. His drooping head revealed his confusion, and he could not answer readily. The editor lifted the boy's chin with his cane.

"Young man," he said, "it never pays to hang your head when you are spoken to. Stand up like a man and look your questioner in the eye."

He passed on, and my friend, although humiliated, thanks him to this day.

We climbed the fence, and hurried on, first to the town's undertaking shop. Before it, seated in the sunlight, were two old soldiers. One pointed up the street, and, as I turned, spat a mouthful of tobacco juice on my bare feet.

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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That hurt my boyish self-respect. I was at the point of tears, when the offender offered plausible apology.

“Now, Cap,” he said gently enough, “don’t mind that. It was all a mistake. I mistook your foot for a brick. I won’t do it again. I want to talk to you about the baseball suit we’re going to get you,” and he rattled on of cap and shirt, pants, stockings and shoes, along with ball and bat.

And I believed him. All that fall those two old sinners kept me in blissful expectation of the gift, and week after week I visited them on Saturday, to be met with more excuses. It was, indeed, years before I realized how thoughtlessly they had played on my credulity.

They never knew the risk they ran of destroying my faith in a promise.

Sam Fell, a little Jewish clothier, greeted us as we passed his store at the end of the square. I never saw him without a smile, or when he was not ready for a sale. Nor shall I forget the morgue-like odor of the stack of corduroy clothing in his store.

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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Almost every one wore corduroy in those days, and the skill of modern manufacturers had not yet eliminated the "wet-dog smell." The story ran, indeed, that Sam Fell once carried a sale to consummation by persuading a prospective purchaser by protesting that the odor of the store came from his feet, not from dead rats under the floor or from the corduroys.

Sam once closed another sale by corresponding quickness of thought. Those were the days when spring-bottom trousers were just going out of fashion, and a hard-looking stranger from Grapeville was looking for a pair. Sam showed his whole stock, but in vain.

"Vat's d' matter mit dese bants?" asked Sam, bluntly.

"Thar ain't no style to 'em; they hain't got spring enough to 'em."

Sam stared mildly over the rims of his glasses.

"Chiminy krouts, man," he said, "you look tough enough mitout spring in your bants. Vy don't you haf Bennet Rask tailor you a pair to order mit spring enough to suit?"



## CHAPTER XVI.

BLACK'S HOTEL—JIM GREEN, HOTEL PORTER—THE GAMBLERS—MINSTREL BAND—THE ABSENT-MINDED MINISTER—DEAFY MILLS AND THE SCOTCH PEDDLER.

WE came, then, to Black's Hotel. On the corner most convenient to the bar the usual crowd was loafing—teamsters, wagon-makers, peddlers, lawyers, carriage painters, and, of course, the town gamblers.

Two inmates of the county home were displaying the results of a postgraduate course in the indulgence which had brought about their distresses. Around the corner slouched Jim Green, the hotel porter, sloven in dress and manner, altogether indifferent to the imputation of "drunken nigger" which was so generally applied.



Inmate of  
County Home

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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Jim, indeed, rather enjoyed the notoriety which his habits brought him.

Once, indeed, when Ed Keenan had hailed him with a cheerful "Mornin'" and "How are you, Jim?" the porter had dropped into his own doggerel to respond:

"I'se kickin', but not high;  
Floppin', but can't fly;  
I's had two drinks dis mawnin',  
An' still I'm dry."

The old town appreciated that verse. With all his intemperance, Jim was an ardent defendant of his race. The highest compliment he was ever known to give a friend, indeed, was to tell him that, "although he had a white skin, he had a black heart."

"Flash" Hurd, one of the card-players in the hotel group, was a fine-looking, well-dressed man of the most polished manners. He lived always at the best hotel in town, and he was accustomed to spend his afternoons in front of it, entertaining, with exhaustless store of wit and anecdote, a few of his confreres.

The old town was always a good town for the gamblers. There were, in fact,

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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half a dozen families in which the gaming instinct had been transmitted from father to son for generations. There were not a few cases in which grandfather, father and son sat in the same game, and enjoyed it.

This sporting element was always generous in its support of the baseball club, and did much for football, then in its infancy. The old town always had good teams in both fields. Those who played well were held to be deserving of their reward. Indeed, I still treasure a beautiful ash bat with an invisible lead slug in its hollow center. It was useless as a bat, of course, but the things one wins as a boy are always precious.

Across the way, at the foot of the steps which led to Courthouse Square, a group of young men watched a picturesque figure in make-up like that of a Revolutionary soldier. It was poor, simple-minded Colonel Rodgers from George Station, and he was going through a drill for them.

Erect and distinguished in bearing, wearing a long, braided military coat, re-

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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splendent epaulets and an impressive "two-way" high hat, gilded and be-feathered, he swung a saber as he snapped out rasping orders to imaginary soldiers in imagined maneuvers on a make-believe battlefield. He did no harm, and every boy liked to watch him.



Son of an Hon-  
orable

A tall, slender man, elegantly attired in black, who wore a queer, flat-topped, broad-brimmed hat, passed by, and the Colonel halted.

He faced the loafing group and ejaculated suddenly:

"Comrades, where did he get that hat?"

The loafers made no reply, for the man in question was the son of an honorable of the old town, and an author of promise, whose first book had just attracted much attention. But the Colonel's question lives.

To-day the people of that community continue to tell of the cracked old Colonel's query, and affirm with confidence that it supplied the inspiration for that

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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ballad, popular a generation since, which ran, "Where Did You Get That Hat?"

But a newcomer saved us all embarrassment. A big, round fellow came waddling up the walk "Billy Bounce" fashion, and hailed the spectators cheerily, then addressed himself to the Colonel.

"Sir," said he, "if you will march your heroic soldiers down to my hotel, I will give them all a drink.

The Colonel made the right-about, saluted magnificently, clicked his heels together, and bellowed:

"I thank you, Colonel Hixon. I shall march my forces right down. You honor my troops, and we are very grateful to you, sir.

"Company, attention! Forward! March!"

We watched them march down toward the bar, for Landlord Hixon was as good as his invitation.

From the little square before Black's Hotel came the blare of horns, and we ran to catch up with the procession. Duprez



Bill Hixon

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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and Benedict's Minstrels were in town, and we had forgotten it. In forty seconds "Skinny" and I, too, were in line.

The minstrel band was gloriously uniformed. Its brass and silver horns shone in the autumn sun and its gaily ornamented drums were a delight. We singled out Duprez, of course—the music-master of his generation, whose cornet solos seemed incomparable. And, as we watched him in admiration, we saw our own "Chalk" Kibble, chief cornetist in our home-town band, in the forefront of the spectators, paying mute, but unconcealed, tribute to the technique of the minstrel man.

But above the blare of the music rose a shout of "Look out there! Get back! Get back!" and the crowd swung to the curb as a careless rider went through at the gallop. He looked neither to right nor left, oblivious to the indignation he aroused and to the risk he ran.

Tom Washabaugh, constable extraordinary and guardian of the old town's peace, pushed his way into the middle of the street and hailed the horseman in sten-

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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torian tones, but he clattered on up Academy Hill, frightening people and horses and rousing every dog in town.

Constable Washabaugh addressed the town.

“Dang that preacher,” he proclaimed. “I’ve told him for the last time he must quit going through town at that pace. I’m going to arrest him now.”

Of course that roused sympathy for the horseman; protests against the officer’s program came fast. The horseman was the godly pastor of our church.

The press of pastoral duties made him always in haste when he ventured abroad on horseback, and he combined the love of fast horses with his affection for his flock. Moreover, he was absent-minded. He has long since gone to his reward, but his influence must live in his church and his community.

Among the most interested of the listeners in the first row along the gutter



Constable

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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was "Deafy" Mills, veteran of the war between the States, who never appeared without his uniform.

"Deafy" was deaf as the proverbial adder, a circumstance which affirmed his patriotic spirit, for even the United States Pension Department admitted that his ear-drums had been broken by the roar of artillery. His sense of sight seemed the more acute, and his mastery of the art of lip-reading was the wonder of the town.



Cheese-cutter Mills

His accepted name was "Cheese-cutter," and every boy knew him by that title, though he dared not use it to his face.

"Deafy" wandered into Amos Kiehl's grocery one day to find on display an old-fashioned rat-trap, made by fastening a powerful spring to a V-shaped board in such a manner that it would descend with crushing force upon the rat which nibbled the bait beneath. The trap was



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set that day, and "Deafy" stuck in his hand.

The spring sang as the board came down, breaking four of "Deafy's" fingers. The old soldier yelled, and the grocer ran out to release the spring.

"What is that dinged thing, Amos?" shouted "Deafy."

The grocer explained.

"Ge-e-e-e-s-s-s Cripes," rejoined the veteran. "I thought it was a patent cheese-cutter."

## HE FOUND IT.

A well-known Indiana man,  
One dark night last week,  
Went to the cellar with a match  
In search of a gas leak.  
(He found it.)

John Welch by curiosity  
(Dispatches state) was goaded;  
He squinted in his old shotgun  
To see if it was loaded.  
(It was.)

A man in Macon stopped to watch  
A patent cigar-clipper;  
He wondered if his finger was  
Not quicker than the nipper.  
(It wasn't.)

A Maine man read that human eyes  
Of hypnotism were full;  
He went to see if it would work  
Upon a hungry bull.  
(It wouldn't.)

—*San Francisco Bulletin.*

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Beside "Deafy" Mills was old Jamie McKnight, a Scotchman, who had come to the community two generations earlier, and who picked up a precarious living by the sale of needles, pins, corn and bunion eradicators, shoestrings and liniment. He carried his wares in a little home-made chest, covered with black oilcloth, with a tray above in which samples were displayed for inspection. A belt from the chest ran round his waist and straps about his neck, so that both hands were free.

Jamie was a little man, and he looked much younger than his years. He boasted always his exemplary life, but he had still another explanation for his fine physical condition.

Jamie was accustomed to take raw wheat, run it through a coffee-grinder until it reached the consistency of old-fashioned oatmeal, and eat each morning a tablespoonful, seasoned with a little salt and covered, perhaps, with milk—not cream—or with diced apples, prunes, dates or figs. He would explain, none too elegantly, the necessity for the most complete mastication and the advantages of

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the food as a laxative. None who ever tried his remedy questioned its worth.

Who knows but, if old Jamie McKnight's raw wheat had been advertised after the modern method, his name might not have been posted far and near and his life ended in luxury?

## CHAPTER XVII.

“HONEY FLY” HAYNES.

**A** CROSS the square, upon the hillside overlooking the valley of Jack’s Run and the railroad, one might see the home of “Honey Fly” Haynes under the trees,



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a little place which looked to eastward, as it seemed he always did.

He was a Civil War veteran, and a bachelor because of it—this man whom children called “Honey Fly” in love, and men like him have always been too rare.

He had been wounded desperately in some forgotten skirmish, and his spine was pitifully twisted. When he walked, his breast protruded like a pouter pigeon’s. He had an enormous Adam’s apple, and when he spoke a painful “Ah,” a laborious swallow, and another “Ah” broke into every sentence. The first impression could not but be repellent, yet no child could look twice into his kind face, framed in long, gray hair and shaded by a broad-brimmed Quaker hat, without instinctive trust, which grew to admiration.

He was the only honey-bee man in that old town, and he must have drawn sweetness of his spirit from his bees. I never knew a sunnier soul.

“Honey Fly” claimed to know, not only the methods, but the political relations, of his bees, and he could tell about them. In his own halting, yet sure, way

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he told the children—for the children would always listen—of how the hives awake in spring, of the formation and departure of the swarms, the foundation of the new city, the birth, combat and nuptial flight of the young queens, the massacre of the males, and, at the last, of the return of winter.

He had never heard of Maeterlinck, yet his sympathy must have been as true, his insight as genuine and his knowledge every whit as comprehensive. He so loved his bees and their product that only adversity compelled the sale of honey. He spoke of the quality of his commodity, of the perfection of the comb and the bouquet of the honey as though he felt a personal and parental relationship to every bee. He took his money as though accepting it for the sale of some handiwork of an only child. He smelled even of the bee and its honey.

His garden was a delight, as men's gardens always are. The flowers were old-fashioned, even for forty years ago, and they grew under and above the great grape-arbors. The clusters which they

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bore, I'll warrant, still seem to the boys of that old town like those which the children of Israel bore back from Canaan. They always call to mind that picture, in the book of Bible stories, of the men who carried back their proof of the fruitfulness of the land upon a pole across two men's shoulders.

He had a fig-tree, too, of which a rare story ran.

"Honey Fly" loved that fig-tree, and cared for it as for a child. An inquisitive young matron of the neighborhood, running in one day to borrow flowers, paused before it, and, turning naively to the owner, expressed surprise at the smallness of the leaves. "Honey Fly" told the story gently, but he never told her name. He was that kind of a man.

"Honey Fly" was a man of splendid courage. He knew life, and, despite the handicap which his heroism had laid upon him, he faced it unafraid. We boys would sit at his feet for hours to hear him tell of war as he had seen it.

Always he glorified his comrades' courage, emphasized the suffering and



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hardship, the grief and pain, which they had endured. In those days I never thought of the price which he had paid, and his parents with him.

These four years past I have grown wiser. My two boys answered the call to arms in the spring of 1917, and, though their mother and I sent them out proudly, we found little pleasure in the sending. No doubt "Honey Fly's" father and mother felt even as we did, and knew unutterable woe when their boy came back maimed and suffering with horrible nervousness. How many fathers and mothers, I wonder, and how many stalwart young men, have considered the sacrifices of their elders in a new light within these last years? I am not likely to forget with what pride my wife and I first read this bit of verse, thrust into my hand by my aviator son when I bade him good-by at his Texas training-camp just before he left for overseas:

## WE WHO STAY AT HOME.\*

EDGAR A. GUEST.

When you were just our little boy, on many a night  
we crept

Unto your cot and watched o'er you and all the  
time you slept.

We tucked the covers round your form and  
smoothed your pillow, too,

And sometimes stooped and kissed your cheeks, but  
that you never knew.

Just as we came to you back then through many a  
night and day,

Our spirits now shall come to you—to kiss and  
watch and pray.

Whenever you shall look away into God's patch of  
sky,

To think about the folks at home, we shall be  
standing by.

And as we prayed and watched o'er you when you  
were wrapped in sleep,

So through your soldier danger now the old-time  
watch we'll keep.

You will not know that we are there, you will not  
see or hear,

But all the time, in prayer and thought, we shall  
be very near.

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## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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The world has made of you a man; the work of  
man you do;

But unto us you still remain the baby that we  
knew;

And we shall come, as once we did, on wondrous  
wings of prayer,

And you will never know how oft in spirit we are  
there.

We'll stand beside your bed at night, in silence  
bending low,

And all the love we gave you then shall follow  
where you go.

Oh, we were proud of you back then, but we are  
prouder now;

We see the stamp of splendor God has placed upon  
your brow.

And we, who are the folks at home, shall pray the  
old-time prayer,

And ask the God of mercy to protect you with His  
care.

And as we came to you of old, although you never  
knew,

The hearts of us, each day and night, shall come  
with love to you.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ORGAN-GRINDER, THE FANTASTIC  
PARADES, THE STREET FAKIRS,  
AND "STRAP OIL."

WE could not have asked a better day to tour Main Street. The sunshine and the minstrel band had brought everybody out, and there was sport a-plenty for all.

Just below the hotel a crowd of youngsters had gathered about an Italian organ-grinder, whose peg-legged instrument supplied popular airs, while his diminutive monkey, red-capped and coated, danced. The monkey bowed politely in response to applause when the reel was finished, and then passed the hat, bowing again whenever a child dropped a coin.

But he was cautious, for, when the round of the circle was done, he tested the coins with his teeth, one by one, before he transferred them to his coat pocket.

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The visits of organ-grinders, however, were not to be compared to those of the foreigners who once came through with a great trained bear. They stopped at a



Trained Bear

convenient corner, and, while one recited a weird incantation, the bear handled adeptly a long pole. Then, when the incantation gave way to a sort of "hootchy-kootchy" rhythm, the bear began the

very oddest of gyrations.

Our elders were not responsive to this type of entertainment, but the children followed in admiring droves from corner to corner.

That square, by the way, reminds me of the fantastic parades the boys of the old town were accustomed to hold every New Year's Day, and how, on that celebrated spot, Capt. Lubbie McClellan conducted his great artillery parade and cannon-firing demonstration.

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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He decorated a big wagon with the national colors of half a dozen lands, and mounted upon it an enormous wooden pump, painted in excellent imitation of a bronze cannon. Four horses, adorned with flags and bunting, hauled it all over town in wake of the parade, and finally halted in the square, because the biggest crowd was there.

At the command of the captain, boys unhitched the team and led it up a side street, then waved back the throng.

Meanwhile others were unlimbering the pretended gun and spiking the buffer to the ground as a preliminary to the salute. Captain McClellan advanced to the breech to light the charge.

This was too much for the innocent bystanders, who had watched before with amused interest. A man made his way through the crowd and hurried toward the captain, shouting:

“Don’t you dare shoot that there cannon off here. You’ll break all our windows.”

Still protesting, he was pushed back into the crowd, which gave way on all

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sides. The captain struck another match; there was a sputtering in the breech, a puff of blue smoke, and the deafening report of a giant fire-cracker within.

The boys had limbered up their piece, hitched up the horses and were off before half the crowd knew how they had been "sold."

In that square, too, the street fakirs always staged their performances, and the tight-rope walkers made their way above the heads of the spectators, balance-pole in hand. The rope was always stretched from Black's Hotel to Wiltshire's three-story brick block across the way. These were the tallest buildings in town.

We never passed the jail without entering and slipping back through the hall to the prison door. There were hard-looking individuals loafing within, and the dungeon odor—stale tobacco smoke, damp exhalations, chloride of lime and human perspiration—was altogether depressing to the curious visitor.

From somewhere in the shadows a slim figure started up, and a bullet-headed youth, close-cropped, with shifty, beady



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eyes, came forward to the big barred gate, smiling ingratiatingly at us.

We shrank back as he thrust his scrawny arms through the grating and asked for something to eat. We gave him our last apple, fearfully, and fled. He was a degenerate, awaiting trial for the murder of a little child.

Outside of the door Sheriff Kilgore hailed us, laid his hand upon my shoulder, and asked of our families. As we turned to go, he handed me a dime, and was gone within before I could thank him. That man knew a boy's heart. How often have I compared him with those brothers who promised me the baseball suit!

## IN A FRIENDLY SORT O' WAY.

When a man ain't got a cent, and he's feeling  
kind o' blue,  
An' the clouds hang dark an' heavy, an' won't let  
the sunshine through,  
It's a great thing, oh, my brethren, for a feller  
just to lay  
His hand upon your shoulder in a friendly sort  
o' way!

It makes a man feel curious, it makes the teardrops  
start,  
An' you sort o' feel a flutter in the region of the  
heart;  
You can look up and meet his eyes; you don't  
know what to say  
When his hand is on your shoulder in a friendly  
sort o' way!

Oh, the world's a curious compound, with its honey  
and its gall,  
With its cares and bitter crosses, but a good world,  
after all.  
And a good God must have made it—leastways,  
that is what I say,  
When a hand is on my shoulder in a friendly sort  
o' way.

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The dime went for gingersnaps and raisins, and we sat down on dry-goods boxes to eat. John Reed and "Ez" Gross spied us, and we saw them whispering. Presently "Ez" hailed us.

"Boys, do you want to earn a nickel? Skip down to 'Hen' Breitagam, in the shoeshop, and get a nickel's worth of strap oil."

He handed me a paper-wrapped parcel, cautioning against breaking it, and we took turns carrying it gingerly for four blocks.

Uncle Henry was at his cobbler's bench, and he looked over his glasses quizzically. Then he rose wearily, went into the cubby-hole back of his workshop, and presently returned the package to us.

"You keep the nickel," he said, "and tell 'Ez' this is all I've got, and not to send for any more."

We hoped, then, for five cents for the trip and five more when we had climbed the hill again, but we had no such luck. "Ez" roared when he received the cobbler's message, and opened the package to display a broken lamp-chimney. But

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he did give us a handful of kisses, paper-wrapped, with love jingles on the wrappers.

Sending youngsters for "strap oil" was a favored joke in those days, for strap oil meant merely the liberal application of a strap.

It took many pairs of shoes for our big family, and father sent us always to Uncle Henry's to have them made to measure. He used good materials, and his workmanship was always excellent, but the shoes always seemed too large, and they had the knack of turning up at the toes.

Years afterward my elder brother and I met old Henry in the street at Altoona, and hailed him. He remembered us, and presently said, in reminiscence:

"You boys had a good father, a good father. But you always complained your boots and shoes were too big. I can tell you why: He always came in the day after you ordered a pair and told me to make them two sizes big. 'The boys are growing,' he said. 'The boys are growing.' "

At last we understood. Dear, thoughtful dad.

## CHAPTER XIX.

ASHES ON THE SLIDE—PIKE POLE—AMOS KELLY, AND NATHANIEL DICKENHOOPER.

**R** ESENTFUL despite the candy, we left Reed & Gross' store and came again to the Pittsburgh Street down which they had sent us on our silly errand.

Pittsburgh Street was the old town's section of the Pittsburgh and Philadelphia Pike, the first improved highway between East and West, and the route traversed by the first settlers of the Northwest Territory. For many years it was a toll road, the nearest toll-gates being located respectively a mile east and west of town.

Ezra Meeker, a pioneer who journeyed West in the fifties by ox-cart, took this road, and he returned in 1910, advertising the Oregon trail, on his way to Washington. Our chief interest in the road, however, arose from the fact that West Pittsburgh Street, from Main Street

to the bottom of Bunker Hill, afforded the best coasting in town.

We always abhorred Lawyer "Andy" Fulton, who lived on the slope, and who seemed to delight in sprinkling ashes on the slide.

"Andy" spoke with a broad burr, and we boys were accustomed, as we flashed past, to hail him with "Wha' Hoo, Andy."

He did not like that, and one night, when we were noisier than usual, he appeared at his front door. Shaking his fist into the night, as he was accustomed to shake it at an adversary in the law, he shouted:

"You young hounds will wake up in a blamed sight hotter place than this some fine morning baying your everlasting 'Wha' Hoo.'"

He slammed the door, and we all felt better.

## ASHES ON THE SLIDE.\*

EUGENE FIELD.

When Jim and Bill and I were boys many years  
ago,  
How gaily did we use to hail the coming of the  
snow!  
Our sleds, fresh painted red and with their runners  
round and bright,  
Seemed to respond right briskly to our clamor of  
delight,  
As we dragged them up the slippery road that  
climbed the rugged hill  
Where perched the old frame meetin'-house, so  
solemn like and still.

Ah, coasting in those days—those good old days—  
was fun indeed!  
Sleds at that time I'd have you know were paragons  
of speed!  
And if the hill got bare in spots, as hills will do,  
why, then,  
We'd haul on ice and snow to patch those bad  
spots up again;  
But, oh! with what sad certainty our spirits would  
subside  
When Deacon Frisbee sprinkled ashes where we  
used to slide!

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Company, New York.

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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The deacon he would roll his eyes and gnash his  
toothless gums,  
And clear his skinny throat, and twirl his saintly,  
bony thumbs,  
And tell you: "When I wuz a boy, they taught me  
to eschew  
The godless, ribald vanities which modern youth  
pursue!  
The pathway that leads down, down to hell is slip-  
pery, straight and wide;  
And Satan lurks for prey where little boys are  
wont to slide!"

Now, he who ever in his life has been a little boy  
Will not reprove me when he hears the language  
I employ  
To stigmatize as wickedness the deacon's zealous  
spite  
In interfering with the play wherein we found  
delight;  
And so I say, with confidence, not unalloyed of  
pride:  
"Gol durn the man who sprinkles ashes where the  
youngsters slide!"

Deacon Frisbee long ago went to his lasting rest,  
His money well invested in farm mortgages out  
West;  
Bill, Jim and I, no longer boys, have learned  
through years of strife  
That the troubles of the little boy pursue the man  
through life;



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That here and there along the course wherein we  
hoped to glide

Some envious hand has sprinkled ashes just to  
spoil our slide!

And that malicious, envious hand is not the dea-  
con's now.

Grim, ruthless Fate, the evil sprite none other is  
than thou!

Riches and honors, peace and care, come as they  
beck and go;

The soul, elate with joy to-day, to-morrow writhes  
in woe;

And till a man has turned his face unto the wall  
and died,

He must expect to get his share of ashes on his  
slide!

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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“Pike Pole” Meller, a driver still more reckless than our preacher, almost ran over us as he dashed by, headed for Black’s Hotel.

“Pike Pole” got his name by bringing a load of pike poles into town once on a Sunday, having got mixed up in the days of the week. As he drove up Main Street, he heard the church bells ringing, and noticed that the stores were closed. People in their Sunday best looked at him curiously and with reproach.

Puzzled, he drew up before Henry Welty’s store, and made inquiry of Squire Roarer.

“What in tarnation is the matter here to-day?” he asked. “Why do they ring the bells, and why ain’t this store open?”

The squire could be heard across the street.

“You danged fool,” said he, “don’t you know this is Sunday?”

And the name “Pike Pole” stuck.

The music of the minstrel band had died away, and the crowd had disappeared. The street was quiet again, save where the three colored barbers, Luncie

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brothers and Frank Lupton, porter at the Zimmerman House, were whistling merrily in anticipation of the evening's delight.

Frank Lupton never missed a minstrel show in the old town, and he always sat in the front row in the gallery, and laughed louder than any other three men in the house. The players soon knew him, and, by pointed jests and winks and seemingly casual references, would stir him to greater outbursts. His laughter, we all felt, was worth the price of the show.

Just then a customer stepped into the shop, and the three barbers hurried in, waiting only to pick up poor old "Bawley" Himmel, who had taken too much of "Vinegar Bitters."



Amos Kelly

A cigar-store clerk was teasing Amos Kelly, driver of "Blind Dan" Taylor's dray, just to hear him swear. Amos was the profanest man in town, given to most violent vileness and most sinful oaths.

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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Amos was the inspiration for a colloquialism much used by the citizens, and when one wished to emphasize an assertion, he was accustomed to say: "You bet your Amos Kelly."

With all his profanity, Amos had a fondness for Sunday school, and just before Christmas he always became a regular attendant. It was at the Lutheran Sunday school that he made history.

As the scholars passed out, Superintendent Trauger stood at the door with the glad handshake and a pleasant word for all. As Amos hobbled past, he greeted him cordially.

"Well, Amos, I am glad to see you here again," he said. "I hope you liked our Sunday school."

Amos swallowed fast, his head poised like a robin which listens for an earthworm.

"You bet your blankety-blank-blank I did," he said.

The expression lived.

We were too busy, or too young, to note the little courting-bees already under way in every doorway, shaded porch or

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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hammock. Every young man in the old town was out, making the most of his Saturday half-holiday, preparing for the Sabbath eve flirtation. It was always thus.

Beyond the square we stopped, according to our custom, before the biggest general store of the town to "skin the cat" on the hitching-rail along the curb. As we did so, a hustling young clerk came out of the store cellar with a jug of molasses in one hand and a big mackerel in the other. The proprietor was talking with a well-to-do coal operator, and the two were manifestly bored when a local millwright, who had rested too long at the nearest tavern, insisted on joining in the conversation.

Years afterward I was one of the engineers selected for the survey of land optioned for purchase in the Crab Creek coal-field by that storekeeper, Mr. Donohue, and he sent us far back into the hills to the farm of Nathaniel Dickenhooper. He came along in his big spring-wagon.

Half a mile from the farm we met old man Dickenhooper, and Mr. Donohue made much of him, saying finally:

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“Nathaniel, the boys will want dinner, and I suppose your good wife will get it for them. I know they’ll get a good feed, for there isn’t a better cook in the county.”

“Wall, I dunno,” was the response. “She cooked a chicken for you yesterday, and you didn’t come, an’ ever since she’s been as tarnation cranky as an ol’ hen. That’s why I’m so far from home. You go see for yourself. I’m dad-burned if I will.”

That rather disturbed us, for farm-houses were scarce on Crab Creek, but we picked out Jim Keenan, our best talker, to beard the lioness, and he soon returned with the best of news. Mr. Donohue then called old Dickenhooper aside, produced a legal paper of some sort, and asked me to hold the ink-bottle while the old man signed his name. We had to use the flat top of a fence rail for a writing-desk.

The old man spoke disparagingly of his penmanship as he dipped pen in ink, and I soon knew why. His labored “Nathaniel” took up the whole of the first blank line across the sheet, and he shook

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his head regretfully, remarking: "Guess I didn't cal-clate 'xactly right, Mr. Donohue."

Donohue urged him on, and a second laborious effort brought forth a wide-spread, sprawling "Dickens," which took the whole of the second line.

The "Hooper" took the whole of the third dotted line, and every one was satisfied.

Mr. Donohue left then, on some plausible excuse, expressing regret that he could not enjoy Mrs. Dickenhooper's cookery with us. Two hours later we knew why.

The flies ate more than we did, and there was nothing on the table that I could abide—meat, butter, vegetables. At either end was a big dish of elderberries, cooked on the stems, which were calculated to spoil any appetite. Even the bread stuck in my teeth.

Old man Dickenhooper was a solicitous host, however, much puzzled by the dainty appetites of "Yeou Taown Fellows," and forever urging us to "pitch in." At last he brought us a basket of very fair apples.

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We thought, then, that Mrs. Dickenhoo-per's dinner had been affected by her temper, but Mr. Donohue told me later that they were ever thus. Old Nathaniel seemed to thrive upon such fare, none the less.



## CHAPTER XX.

THE LANDLORD OF THE KETTERING HOUSE,  
THE SNAKE-CHARMER, AUNT LIZZIE  
KINCAID AND THE HORSE DOCTOR.

THE West Newton hack was just leaving the post-office across from Donohue's store, and the postmaster stood just outside the doorway, in talk with the Kettering House landlord. The landlord, short and fat, was in full regalia of the military order of his lodge.

Whenever he appeared thus it was indication that some member had died, and the hour of burial was at hand.

If the funeral was to be late in the day, the landlord was accustomed to dress for it in the morning, and lose no opportunity of pa-



Kettering House  
Landlord

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rating about the town in uniform. When thus arrayed, you could hear him coming half a block away, chains and trappings clinking, and sword scabbard clattering on the pavement.

Jonathan Schneider, who had a local reputation as



Dutch Liz

a snake-charmer, was entertaining a sidewalk group we would have joined, when a chunky, cross-eyed woman, trundling a two-wheeled cart

loaded with fresh, ripe fruit and crisp vegetables, made all give way. It was "Dutch Liz," the first person in the old town to peddle such supplies from door to door.

Lawyer Lane, bachelor of uncertain age, and sensitive as a girl about just that, came out of his office and headed for the

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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courthouse, no doubt to some political conference.

He was a capable counselor, a shrewd politician, but he bore the name of being "near" in money matters. His friends, as well as his enemies, remembered the time he had entertained a Governor of the State at a banquet in the Laird House, to meet attorneys and prominent citizens of the town. The banquet consisted of a pale, watery oyster stew, with water crackers on the side.

"Aunt" Lizzie Kincaid greeted us pleasantly. Quiet, kindly, unassuming, she loved the townspeople and the townspeople all loved her. She welcomed more new babies than any doctor, and old "Doc" Anawalt was wont to tell his patients not to worry if they could not reach him in the hour of their need.

"She'll care for you better than I could," he was accustomed to say, and he meant it.

Sid Vail, who looked after the vats in the tannery, was a quaint and improvident soul, with a rapidly increasing family.

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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Once, when a visitor at his home admired his youngest and inquired in regard to the doctor, Sid replied:

"Doctor? Huh, we don't need any doctor in this end of town. We get Aunt Lizzie."

"She must make a lot of money," hazarded the guest.

"I guess she does," was Sid's ag-grieved reply. "She held me up for seventy-five cents for this last one."



Doctor Moyer

Bill Lowry, horseman, was leading a dejected-looking animal up the street, and he asked us to summon Doctor Moyer. Moyer was neither allopath nor homeo-path, but just plain horse.

He stuck his hand in the animal's mouth, and expressed the professional opinion that the beast was nine years old.

"I know that," said Bill, "but I want to know what's wrong with him. He's sick."

Doctor Moyer never cracked a smile.

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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“I know he vas sick,” he replied, “und I don’t feel vell mineself. I vas oudt all last night mit a cow.”

But he knew how to relieve the animal.

At Shuster’s grocery the South Side congress was in session. Its members were always there—on the steps or on boxes—and they never seemed to work. They all gave cheerful greeting to Joe Tipton, son-in-law to the town brewer, who passed them with a “blue boy”—a gallon keg of amber cheer.

Across the street Leopold Wengler, pioneer jeweler, complained of the dullness of trade.

He had enjoyed a monopoly for many years, when the Fisher boys, who learned the trade under his direction, opened an opposition store. Bob Fisher hired me, then, as an all-round clerk, clock-cleaner and delivery boy.

One of my regular jobs was to pick out one of the best clocks in the store each day and carry it past Wengler’s store, in order to convince him that his rival was making some good sales. I came back by alley-ways and side streets.



## CHAPTER XXI.

“BLIND LEW” KENDALL, THE TOWN CONSTABLE, THE PRINTING-OFFICE, THE TOWN ARTIST AND JIM SILVIS, THE HACK DRIVER.

LITTLE Eddie Gray, leading “Blind Lew” Kendall, stopped us to ask if we were going to the minstrel show. “Blind Lew” was going to hear the music.

He was the old town’s best-known optimist, always ready with a cheerful smile and a kindly word for his acquaintances. Knowing them only by their voices, he seldom made a mistake in his salutation.

Ever a favorite with the young folk of the town, he attended every ball game, standing with his hands on some youngster’s shoulders, and rooting with the best as his friend called out the plays.

Lew was hardly forty, but he seemed an old, old man. He had lost one eye at

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Antietam, and had been invalided home. Years of suffering preceded the loss of the other, but this affliction never crushed his spirit. He had learned to make brooms, and no better broom than his was made. The housewives of the town always insisted upon his handiwork.

I remember visiting his little home in the late summer, and going with him through his wonderful garden. He showed me beautiful flowers, big red tomatoes, sweet corn, squash, pumpkins, Lima beans and all other vegetables which grew under his constant care.

He told me that his sense of touch informed him of the progress of his produce. He did all the work himself except the plowing, plotting his beds by measuring along the fence. His deft fingers, even, could distinguish weeds from vegetables, and never a weed showed in his little patch of ground.

He was the wonder of the town, in this particular, and his life a very real inspiration to his neighbors.

Lawrence Heimer, who was soon to become the town constable, nodded to us



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from the doorway of his little clothing-store in the shadow of the Masonic Temple and the Underwood House.

Lawrence was a good constable, but excitable, and his excitement often led to weird combinations of German and English.

Many a time he would arrest a man with the words: "I am your brisoner. You come along by me." Once, the story ran, he told a resisting offender who sought to cling to chair or table or door-frame: "You vill, vill you? Shust come oudtzide und put me oudt."

I have always remembered the way in which he told me of his discovery of his son "Spider" in the act of chewing tobacco.

"I shust go up de schdreet by, und turn de corner round, und dere I see my poy mit a big chaw-tobak right in hees moudt."

"Spider" got his.

Jerry Hammer, proud as any showman who ever drove a gilded circus chariot, passed us then with his four-horse team and a great load of coal. Jerry had a

standing challenge to any teamster in the county to match him in a haulage contest. He loved his horses, and he found no takers.

“Lisp” Baynes and Eber Brown were standing in front of Hoffman’s jewelry store, and, though they were our elders, we halted to speak to them.

Eber was the town’s one dwarf, hardly larger than Gen. Tom Thumb, and a friendly little chap. He was a master in outdoor sports, always taking part in baseball and top-spinning and hoop-rolling, and our best trick performer on the velocipede. Every boy in town envied him, for he had been offered a job in P. T. Barnum’s side show.

“Lisp” Baynes was big and fat and rosy-cheeked, with a receding chin and protruding upper teeth. He lisped amazingly.

He was inordinately vain; the best dresser among the older boys, but a jest among the maidens, for he was altogether bashful. He was fortunate, though, in the possession of a dappled pony and dog-cart, and the girls liked that.

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We came, now, to the home of the "Herald and Tribune." The "ghost had just walked," and the printers, pay in pocket, sat on the steps. They talked shop, as printers always do, and some one had just told a funny story for Journeyman Ed Price, who, always weakened when he laughed, was holding to the rail of the steps to keep from falling.

"Skinny" and I knew these printers, and in later years often went to the "Herald" office on press-day to help with the old hand-press and to fold the "patent insides."

One of the comedians in the group, little, old Alex Albertson, had already made several visits to the Kettering House bar. We knew that when we heard him say, as he always did when properly mellowed: "Handsome is as handsome does—a few more days of grace."

I have never figured out just what he meant by it.

As we loitered at the curb, a newcomer joined the group—old "Rusty" Leighton, a tramp printer, who had fought through the war, and had worked on almost every

paper in the country—by his own account. He might well have been the “tourist” in Eugene Field’s “Man Who Worked with Dana on the Noo York Sun.”

It was the custom of printers then, as now, to exploit for their amusement the ignorance of every new apprentice (devil) who came to work with them. He must always trundle a wheelbarrow to the rival plant to borrow a “type-smasher,” and to return laden with railroad iron or other handy junk. He learned, too, all about “type-lice” and “left-handed shooting-sticks,” and acquired other information still less valuable.



Professor Glogger

We disliked to go on, but there were many blocks to traverse, and the afternoon shadows were lengthening.

At the Methodist Church we met Dan Robins and Professor Glogger, the town’s artist, who wore, of course, the Windsor ties affected by their provincial type. Dan Robins was poor, but honest, and his brother James rich and honest, and they were very good friends.

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Each had two daughters, and the rich brother's were soon married, but their husbands did not amount to much. Once James twitted Dan gently about the single blessedness of his pair, and Dan came back less gently:

"When my girls get married, I'll see that they are married off, not on, like yours," he said, and debate ended there.

At Mace's Corners we stopped to chat with Jim Silvis, driver of the Pleasant Unity and Lycippus hack. He always reminded us of Santa Claus when all his toys were gone. Jim looked like the Santa Claus—or the Saint Nicholas—of the well-known verse,

"His eyes, how they twinkled! His dimple, how merry!

His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry.  
He had a broad face and a round little belly  
That shook when he laughed like a bowlful of jelly."

But his horses were always poor and skinny and his harness pieced together



Jim Silvis

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with ropes and scraps of strap. We always wondered how they ever made the hills on the Lycippus road, and as we left him we shouted, "Caw, caw," by way of intimation that they were proper crow bait. Jim didn't care. He laughed, and used the stub of a broken whip to urge the weary beasts on again.

Jim's whole outfit was so worn and disreputable that it creaked and wobbled over the ruts, and his passengers, ever diminishing in number as his fortunes waned and his need grew, were ashamed to come into town in such an equipage, and took to leaving him at Bair's mill, and finishing the trip afoot.

## CHAPTER XXII.

A MELLOW AND AFFABLE CROWD—"BUMBLEBEE" LEWIS—"IODINE JOE" AND HUGH ARTLEY, THE PUMP DOCTOR.

THE north porch of the Kettering House at Mace's Corners held the most distinguished group of citizens we had seen in our whole day. Lawyers, judges and professional men, accustomed to go to work at nine and quit at eleven, were gathered there. The afternoon was slipping away, and they were mellow and affable. The group at the corner watched "Bumblebee" Lewis, who seemed to be debating with himself how best to persuade an acquaintance to buy him another drink.



Bumblebee Lewis

"Bumblebee" never worked, and, now that toxins and anti-toxins have come

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into recognized being, I am confident that a drop of his sweat would turn the huskiest gang of track laborers into I. W. W. shouters. He was a droopy individual, resembling always a wet, old rooster, and he seemed always afflicted by a sniffing, watery cold in his head.

A drop on the end of a man's nose is an unlovely thing, but it does attract an interested glance periodically. You can not keep from wondering what will become of it. "Bumblebee" was always in just that state, his skinny, red proboscis, with its sparkling drop.

"I went to see my gal last night;  
I was with pleasure seeking;  
I missed her mouth and kissed her nose,  
And the 'gol darn' thing was leakin'."

Ugh! I can see him now.

Half a dozen horsemen stopped before the hotel while three small jockeys brought out three spirited thoroughbreds to show their paces in a dash to the Beehive Church and back. The sidewalk group was at attention. It always was, though Saturday afternoon always had its horseshow.



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"Iodine Joe" Little, swipec at a near-by stable, held the blankets, and displayed the most interest. He was a regular holder-on at Cashey's Feed and Sale Stable, and he belied his name. Big and fat and slouchy, careless of dress, long-haired and notably "whiskery," he had been called "Whiskers" until "Iodine" came to be his title.

Joe was the son of a well-to-do farmer who had lost his inheritance because of his fondness for liquor, and who owned only the patched clothes in which he stood. He was the boss harness-cleaner and buggy-washer of the town, and he had a Munchhausen-like reputation for his handling of the facts in a horse trade.

He had once mistaken a bottle of iodine for his own bottle of red-eye, and, though he recovered, he never lived down the name.

Another doctor passed in a one-horse wagon, which held, besides the driver and his dog "Poker," a brand-new, cucumber-



Iodine Joe

green pump. It was Hugh Artley—neither homeopath nor allopath nor horse—but pump doctor to the whole district. He was a notable of those parts, and his dog always sat beside him on the seat.

Hugh was a busy little fellow, always on the jump and always talking. Aside from pumps, his one diversion was politics, and he argued unceasingly. The visitor to his shop was always regaled by startling discussion of the affairs of nation, State and community, and Hugh always spoke his mind.

The old town regarded him with especial esteem because of his trick of locating water with a forked stick of peach or willow. You won't believe it, but the fact remains that when Hugh Artley paraded across country, forked stick in hands, backs down against his waistcoat pockets, the stick would bend to water underground.

Try it yourself and learn belief.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

THE MEN OF GREENDALE, AND AMOS  
KEPPER, THE SPIRITUALIST.

AT Mace's Corners we came to the end of the old town's business district, and faced again the fat farmland of the open country. As I look back, it seems to me—as it did in those days—that that town had more idle men, apparently with no means of support, loafing in its street, than any other community of its size in the country. I know—or think I know, now—why the men of that generation took life so unconcernedly.

The men of that town, in almost every instance, owned their homes, and most of them had a few hundred dollars laid by, and working for them day and night, in six or seven per cent. farm mortgages. They had large and productive gardens and orchards. Their vegetable plots and their fruit-trees supplied them in the sum-

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mer, and from the surplus they stored away food for the winter months. They had capacious cellars, or, lacking those, dug caves out of doors in which to store apples, cabbages, potatoes and the like. What town boy can not remember going out with spade and mattock to open up that treasure-house?

And there were advantages other than the yield of those gardens, insurance as it was against illness and doctors' bills. There was the joy of looking forward to planting-time, or looking through ornately illustrated catalogs from the seed-houses, the joy of turning up the warm, fresh earth, the tender gleam of growing plants and the well-remembered thrill of the first gleaning of fresh vegetables for mother's table.

Every third man on the street owned a cow, too, and sold his less fortunate neighbors butter and milk at a low price, or exchanged these dairy products for fruit, eggs or vegetables. Almost every family kept its hens, and perhaps a few pigs in a pen at the rear of the lot. There were no town ordinances, then, against

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keeping pigs within the corporate limits; the householders competed for the honor of raising the largest porker.

Folk were saving in wearing-apparel then. A suit or dress or overcoat was worn, as a matter of course, for several years. Boots and shoes were hand-made, of real calfskin, cured in old-fashioned tanneries, and they wore for years.

Taxes were low, and few, if any, faced special assessments, for pavements were rare and sidewalks, street-cleaning and flushing, water and light bills were unknown. Every home had its well of clear, palatable, wholesome water, so cool that ice was not required, and a cistern against recurrent wash-days. How many times have I thawed the pump with a red-hot poker, thrust down the core of its cucumber-green body, and carried a thousand bucketfuls of water into the kitchen before the school bell rang!

There was, indeed, no plumbing which a red-hot poker might not relieve. I doubt if there were half a dozen real bathtubs in the town. And there were no gas bills, for gas was rated a great lux-

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ury, and no telephones or electric wires, a few, very few, servant or nurse bills. A kindly aunt or a motherly neighbor rendered those services for which the graduate nurse now requires her twenty-five—or is it thirty-five?—per.

The daily papers did not trouble us. Most men depended upon substantial country weeklies for their general information, and went to religious weeklies or monthlies for their inspiration. There were no street-car fares or bills for gasoline or ice-cream soda or motion-picture theater seats. Ice bills were a rarity, and coal was delivered by the wagon-load and stored in the coal-house at the far end of the lot, as we boys verily believed, that we might have the job of carrying it to the house.

Every family baked its own bread and pies and doughnuts; made its own soap from home-made lye and table of butchering scraps. Flour and groceries were bought in bulk; so were sugar and molasses. Draymen delivered them at the purchaser's expense, and no merchant dreamed of free deliveries.

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The fact is that those dads of ours were wise, resourceful men, who had solved the problem of living happily and in comfort within their means. They were never troubled by social ambition—that scourge of modern life.

Those things which now we call necessities were luxuries, or else undreamed of, but we were none the worse. In those days the whole family gathered about the stove in the one “het” room, and skipped shivering to icy beds when the time came. None grumbled at the cost of living. Perhaps it was just as well.

Those were the days of gilded cattails and water-color mottoes on the wall; the days when asparagus sprigs were stuck behind the pictures for flies to light on; when mother gave dad a moustache cup and dad gave mother a shawl at Christmas time, and the boys got copper-toed boots and the girls red-striped woolen stockings, knitted hoods, fascinators. Sister used to paint her beau’s name on a two-inch ribbon to fit within his hat. (I have one now, and can’t remember where it came from.)

But why go further?

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The old town was like a thousand others of its day, better, perhaps, in recollection than experience. I love it yet, as must every child who ever dwelt there.

Just across the way, in a dilapidated old house, the shutters of which were all drawn, lived old Amos Kepper, the town Spiritualist, eccentric, wealthy, altogether a recluse. He was scarcely ever seen outside his home, but his neighbors knew that he had many callers, friends who gathered to hear him discourse of spirit communion, and who believed implicitly in his power to raise tables as well as ghosts.

They told a rare story of the old man, who was a shrewd hand at a bargain.

“Yank” Brownell had bought a farm from him, paying part cash and offering three annual first-mortgage notes. “Yank” paid the first and second promptly, but three weeks before the last fell due he went to old Amos, asking an extension of three months’ time.

Amos wouldn’t hear of it, at first, but when “Yank” coaxed him he consented to go into the next room and consult his spirit advisers. “Yank” listened, in some



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awe, to the mumblings through the door, and then Amos came back, laughing.

“‘Yank,’” said he, “the spirits seem to think mighty well of you. They tell me things will shape themselves so you’ll have no difficulty meeting that note on the right day. I’ll take their word for it, and expect you to be prompt.”

“Yank” did not despair. He argued again with old Amos, and finally pushed him into the next room, urging him to “put in a good word for ‘Yank’ Brownell with the spirits, and see if they won’t give him a chance.”

But the spirits insisted that the note be paid on time, and paid it was.

Ever after that Amos Kepper cited this instance to justify his faith in mystic power, always concluding with the declaration that “the mind above is greater than mine, and it has never failed to advise me safely.”

It was no wonder that we passed the Kepper house in haste.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

THE OPEN COUNTRY—PILLARS IN THE  
CHURCH—THE TOWN BOOT-MAKER—  
CEMETERY HILL AND THE TOWN TRAG-  
EDY.

THE business district ended at Mace's Corners, and we faced again the open country. Down a last cross-street we heard two men disputing emphatically in language which we did not altogether understand. It was Gen. Dick Courtney and Zach Grerton, and they swore mightily.

Both were pillars in the church, and each abominated the other.

The town recalled how, when General Courtney once heard his small son Dick trying an unusual swear word, he turned in surprise to his wife to say:

“Oh, Emma, Emma, this boy of ours must have been playing about where Zach Brerton was.”

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I still wonder if good Doctor Hacke, of the Beehive Church, talking to his sexton Truxell, just around the corner, heard these good church neighbors.



Sexton Truxell

We came now to our own church, the Presbyterian, where Jabez College, the janitor, was sweeping down the steps in preparation for the services of the morrow. The big double doors, which led from vestibule to auditorium, were open, and we could look through to the plain wooden benches which served for pews.

The wealthier parishioners brought their own cushions, and sometimes upholstered the little wooden benches which served for foot-rests. The pulpit was beyond the rows of pews, and the choir loft above it.

Beside the church was the parsonage—never the manse, as some will call it nowadays—and next it stood old man Bott's shoe-store. There it was that Bass Mell,

the town dandy, met defeat at the hands of the proprietor.

Bass had ordered a pair of calfskin boots, giving the most explicit directions in regard to quality and style, but making no advance payment or inquiry as to price. Two weeks later he came in with friends to ask for them. The cobbler knew his tardiness in meeting obligations, and he said dryly:

“No, the boots ain’t done, but the bill’s made out.”

At the little brick church of the Covenanters half a dozen boys were playing “Anthony Over,” flinging the ball over the roof. Deacon Canon enjoined them gently enough against breaking the windows, but “Hen” Temper, the town tinner, who was repairing the spouting, and who had to dodge repeatedly, was violent in his imprecations.

“Hen” was an expert in the manufacture of tin ornaments for buildings, able to produce anything from an eagle to an elephant. He was known, also, as the first man at every fire, and he used industriously a little hand extinguisher of

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his own invention, which much resembled the modern bicycle pump. He used to carry a pail of water as a supply for it, and choose some vantage-point upon the roof from which he directed a puny stream.

We did not join the game, but passed on, by the home of the Lowry twins, whose governess, Sadie Kildare, did not approve of meddling boys, and halted to watch the Woods girls playing croquet in their beautiful yard.



Deafy Stimp

A disturbance down the street called us on. Some small boys were tormenting "Deafy" Stimp, the town idiot—or, rather, were trying to torment him. But "Deafy," dressed grotesquely in regimentals, fancy hat and feathers, with great gilt epaulets upon the shoulders of a coat three sizes big, marched stiffly along, carrying in one hand a great wooden sword and in the other a pair of beef bones, which he rattled engagingly.

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Then we caught our first ride of the day, jumping in behind Joe Steele's big Somerset wagon, and staying there till we passed crippled Tommy McCabe's root-beer and gingercake store.

At the German burying-ground we jumped off and climbed the high bank to the graveyard fence. It was a favored playground, and the hallowed spot resounded in those years to many a game of "Hi Spy" and "Prisoner's Base." Many soldiers lay buried there, and their low tombstones were convenient for leap-frog. On Memorial Day, though, we children came thither in different spirit, for it was the good custom to march down solemnly, flower-laden, to pay tribute to the dead.

Beyond the cemetery a little way, and not far from Bair's mill, was the crested knoll of Sand Bank Hill, carpeted in green and bowered in wild roses, a restful retreat for the pedestrian and tryst for lovers. On moonlight nights the boys and girls of the old town often made their way there to spoon, risking the interruption only of some drunken miner singing his way home.

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The old town had its tragedies, too, and things better unremembered: vile language, such as no active boy can fail to hear; indecent stories by gray-bearded corner loafers; foul scandal, breathed by lechers on some chaste woman's name; workmen cursing their employers; ingratitude repaying every good.

I would awaken no forgotten heart-ache, but let me, none the less, place my own construction on what seems, at a distance of some forty years, a grievous error of justice.

No one from that old town forgets the bright autumn morning when we learned that "Mack" Hickson had killed a coal miner. "Mack" was the promising son of one of our good landlords, twenty-four, rich in friends, of good education and splendid prospects. The whole town liked him.

In those days the law read that, when a landlord was personally informed by a member of a man's family that he was expected to refuse intoxicants to him as an habitual drunkard, the landlord must refuse or lose his license. This burly miner



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came into the Hickson House bar and demanded drink. The bartender served him, but "Mack," who was in the office, remembered that the man's wife had served notice on the house not to sell him liquor. Hurrying into the bar, he snatched the glass from the miner's hand.

The man assailed him furiously with words and blows, and "Mack" leaped over the bar, drove him back, and finally felled him with a blow on the jaw. The miner's head struck an iron cuspidor, and he died instantly.

Hotel servants, believing the man to be only "paralyzed drunk," dragged him without, and half a dozen young men, all mellowed by their visits to other bars, loaded the corpse into a wheelbarrow and trundled down the street singing cheerily:

"One wide river—there's one wide river to cross."

And then they saw their error, and fled. The law never learned who they were.

"Mack" was taken to jail the next morning, held without bail, tried for manslaughter, and sent to State's prison for

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several years. There was hardly a heart in that old town that did not ache when he was taken away to the place which blasted his hopes, shriveled his soul, warped his ambition, smeared his honor and killed in him all that man holds dear.

Judge not!—thou canst not tell how soon the look  
of bitter scorn

May rest on thee, though pure thy heart as dew-  
drops in the morn.

Thou dost not know what freak of fate may place  
upon thy brow

A cloud of shame to kill the joy that rests upon  
it now.

Judge not!

—*Anonymous.*

## CHAPTER XXV.

LEW HENRY, THE LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEER—  
MRS. MONEGAN'S SHANTY—THE RAIL-  
ROAD WRECK—BAIR'S MILL AND BEGGAR-  
LOOTS.

THE “four-thirty cokes,” slow-moving, grunting trains, were puffing up the steep grade, and we listened for Lew Henry's whistle. We always knew it, and the whole town knew the why of it. Lew had a flirtation with the prettiest girl in Paradise, and he was accustomed to begin whistling away down by the County Home, his blasts growing in volume as he neared Huff's Station. At Paradise, though, he always took his hand from the whistle cord to wave to the belle of those parts, Miss Angie, who was always at the window with a radiant smile for him.

We watched the trains pull past the little engine-house; the old “gallows tree,” where Corrigan was hanged;

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Smith's slaughter-house, the vilest-smelling place in the county, and Mrs. Monegan's little Irish shanty, as we called it. For miles around the country knew Mrs.



Hare-lipped Larry

Monegan, her hare-lipped son Larry and his goats. I must always remember that shanty, for there it was that, for the first and only time, in my life, I saw a violent death.

I was on my way to my grandfather's, south of town, and had just reached the top of Bair's Hill when I heard a great crash and saw that, just at the engine-house, an engine and several south-bound cars had struck a cut of cars and caboose standing on the siding.

I raced over as fast as my little legs could carry me, and reached the wreck just as the trainmen carried the engineer of the south-bound from his cab into Mrs. Monegan's shanty and laid him on the floor, and I saw him writhe in agony and point dramatically to one of the little knot of his companions, and scream hoarsely:

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“You did it. You did it. Your carelessness has killed me.”

And he died before the man, prostrate on his knees beside him, could be forgiven.

From Bair's orchard came the shrill notes of peafowls and guinea-hens, but, though peafowls and guinea-hens are always more interesting to boys than ordinary barnyard poultry, we had no time to stop for inspection. We went down the slope of the knoll to the foot of the hill below the mill.

One of the Bair girls was playing the piano, and we heard the words of that beautiful old song:

“For the moon never beams without bringing me  
dreams

Of my beautiful Annabel Lee;

And the stars never rise but I feel the bright eyes  
Of my beautiful Annabel Lee.”

Some of the young dandies of the old town had dropped in, ostensibly to talk with the Bair brothers, but really to hear their sister sing, and it was apparent, at least to us, that they were waiting for the pretty Mollie to step to the doorway to

greet them. We would not wait for that, though.

We picked our way through flocks of geese which cumbered the roadway, and halted at the old mill to watch the pigeons feeding on the grain which had fallen from wagons. Just then there was a commotion among the young bloods at the gate, for pretty Mollie Breechbill from Pleasant Unity and radiant Kate George from Latrobe, mounted on frisky horses, rode by on their way to town. They were planning, we knew, to enter the Young Ladies' Riding Race at the coming County Fair, and they gave an exhibition of their horsemanship as they went up the hill.

"Skinny" and I hoped they'd win.

"Sunflower" Beardsley was weaving his way along the path beside the road on his weekly visit to the town's taverns. We knew that when he returned he would have a "singing jag." From their father's blacksmith shop over the way the little Knoblock children called after him derisively.

And right there "Sunflower" passed "Beggarloots" Tom Hardy, mumbling and

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staggering. He had already paid his weekly visit to the town.

“Beggarlots” was the man who met a prosperous citizen one morning and greeted him effusively, concluding his well wishes with a request for tobacco. That night, on his way home, he met the same citizen, and saluted him with:

“Go to blazes, Mr. —, I’ve got my own tobacco now.”

“Every time Beggarlots comes to town,

He starts to chase the booze aroun’—

It makes no difference if it gets him down,

He keep on chasing the booze aroun’.”





## CHAPTER XXVI.

“THE FIRST REGRETS OF THE DAY”—THE OLD HOME AND MOTHER—“THE HOME-COMING” AND “THE OLD SWIMMING-HOLE.”

THE first regrets of the day came then. From the valley of the stream that furnished power for the mill climbed a boastful, happy company, homeward bound, their catch dangling from their shoulders.

“Baldy” Brerer, Adam Fisher, Tucker Reamer, Billy Robinson, Lucien Turney, “Hod” Steck and Joe Boomer had been fishing since dawn, and they went home altogether happy.

The sinking sun, the noisy return of the fishermen, the creaking of the great mill doors as old Mr. Bair closed up for the night—these told us that our journey along the Main Street was done. We looked wistfully at the old causeway

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which led up the hill, and turned homeward reluctantly. A cheery greeting from Jesse Kilgore and his wife, who passed us bound for home, and asked us, next Saturday, to visit their farm, made the long walk easier.

On that bright day our hurrying feet carried us past the old home swiftly



Old Home

enough, for we had just begun our journey, but I can not pass it so swiftly now. On the porch we saw my mother, who smiled and waved at us, but she wasted no time.

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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She could not rest, however busy at play might be the sixteen hands of her children. Our feet, perhaps, were seldom quite in the right path, and our hands always in mischief, yet she seemed always with us, always teaching—and, I believe, with success—the elementary principles of truth and honesty and sobriety.

In the evening, now as then, I can see her sweet and kindly face against the darkening background, radiant, refreshing and refining as a benediction the current of my daily life. Always, it seemed, she had a healthy, happy baby in her arms while she called her youngsters together to make ready for sleep, listening to nursery rhymes of every sort, meanwhile.

We children knew the “Mother Goose,” of course, but to this day my favorites are:

“Eeney, meeney, miney, mo,  
Catch a nigger by the toe—  
When he hollers let him go!  
Eeney, meeney, miney, mo,”

and

“Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief,  
Doctor, lawyer, Indian chief,”

and more of the same.

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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And always, after the final moment of evening cheer, we said that well-remembered "Now I lay me," and, with a last "Good night" and a kiss, climbed the stairs to our beds.

The mother who taught me that is eighty-three, but to this day, as then, she lives for her children.

She has almost traversed the Main Street of Life, and Love and Faith and Kindliness are her companions to the journey's end.

## CHILD AND MOTHER.\*

EUGENE FIELD.

O Mother-My-Love, if you'll give me your hand,  
And go where I ask you to wander,  
I will lead you away to a beautiful land—  
The Dreamland that's waiting out yonder.  
We'll walk in a sweet-poise garden out there  
Where moonlight and starlight are streaming  
And the flowers and the birds are filling the air  
With the fragrance and music of dreaming.

There'll be no little tired-out boy to undress,  
No questions or cares to perplex you;  
There'll be no little bruises or bumps to caress,  
Nor patching of stockings to vex you.  
For I'll rock you away on a silver-dew stream,  
And sing you asleep when you're weary,  
And no one shall know of our beautiful dream  
But you and your own little dearie.

And when I am tired I'll nestle my head  
In the bosom that's soothed me so often,  
And the wide-awake stars shall sing in my stead  
A song which our dreams shall soften.  
So, Mother-My-Love, let me take your dear hand,  
And away through the starlight we'll wander—  
Away through the mist to the beautiful land—  
The Dreamland that's waiting out yonder!

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Home-comings such as that, of course, are gone forever, but home-comings are always well worth while. Why not a Home-coming Week for the old town?

Who can doubt the readiness of the boys and girls still there to make every needed arrangement, or the enthusiasm with which their fellows, from Maine to California, would welcome any general invitation? We'd take complete possession of the old town, ramble through the old academy, ring the old bell again, and then come down to loaf in Courthouse Square and rob Culbertson's orchard—if it's still there.

We would crawl under the old culvert and build a dam there and create a swimming-hole, visit the Fairgrounds, choose sides and play ball, if only to show our sons in college what men we used to be. And we would sit in the shade in the old schoolyard—such shade is rare indeed—and talk over the days of long ago. And we'd have the old band, as well as the new band, play every afternoon and evening.

Of course, there would be crow's-feet about the temples of all too many of us,

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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and bald spots a-plenty, but such a home-coming would bring youth again. Age may be forgotten when folks grow old together.

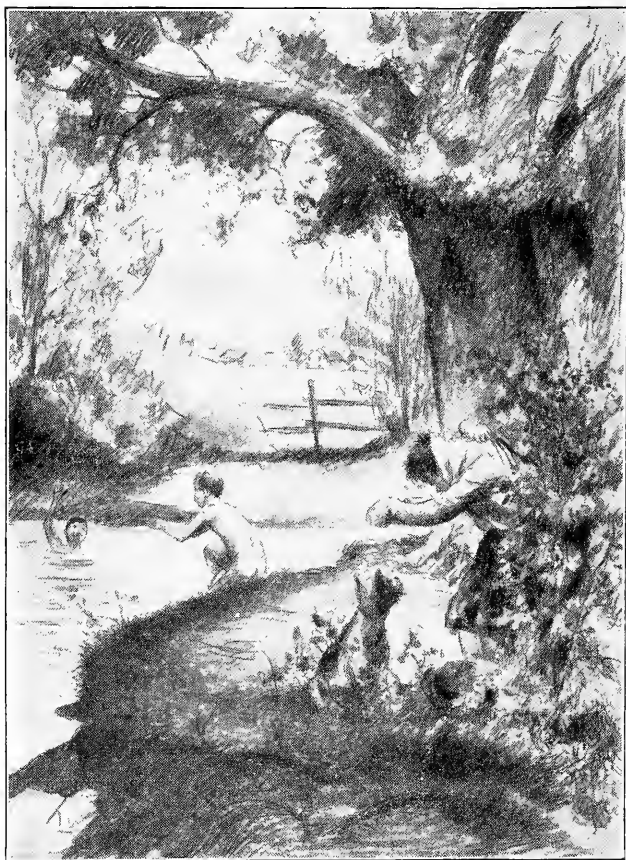
As for me, I can name eight boys and girls who might be trusted to make every effort to return, and it would be their first reunion since the boy first to leave home packed his little trunk, kissed the family all 'round, and started out for himself. We would all be there—Jack and Annie, Will and Jess, Minnie and Budd, and Gertrude and Bess, and mother too. Dad—and Dad would enjoy it as no other—is gone.

Such a Home-coming Week could not but reward every visitor, if only because it would impress upon them that the past is not dead. I would give much to make my journey down My Own Main Street with “Skinny” once again.

But I can not quit that swimming-hole without a further word. My thoughts go back to it as a boy goes back to dive after he has picked up a garment, and he knows it is time to hurry home. And yet it was hardly a swimming-hole to brag of.

## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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The Old Swimming-hole



## MY OWN MAIN STREET

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We made it ourselves, every May. We were accustomed to rob rail fences of the long, sound timbers, and lay them cross-wise of the stream under heaps of stones; to fling in brush, weighted with other stones, and even to plaster crevasses in our crude levee with mud from the yellow clay banks. We built real dams in this way—dams which endured for weeks, unless summer freshets or irate farmers interfered; dams which backed up water sometimes three feet deep and made ponds in which small boys could really swim.

I have worked harder, I maintain, on just such dams as this than ever in forty years of earning my own living, and I suspect that I have derived, at the same time, more real satisfaction from my accomplishments. Swimming-holes in the vicinity of Greendale had to be made, for we were less fortunate than some communities.

And the wonders of a small boy's swim!

What real American boy can forget the hurried "sneak" after school, the race along the dusty wagon-road, the scramble

over and under the fence and the dash through the tall grass to the trees which shaded the bank, the frenzied haste of the disrobing, and the first plunge! But the haste and the plunge were for elders.

The younger boys of every generation have undressed with fear and trembling, laid their clothes out carefully free of the mud, and advanced, knock-kneed and trembling, to stick their toes into the water and lament its chill. They have tried strange camp preventives suggested by their evil-minded elders, have splashed themselves freely on arms and head and chest, and ducked, to come up spluttering.

And they have learned to swim because they had to; have tried breast stroke and dog-fashion between splashing their fellows and painting themselves with mud until they mastered the art, and then branched out into swimming on the back and "Indian fashion," as we styled what now they call the trudgeon. In those days none had heard of the crawl, but I would bet, to-day, on the old ways.

I was ducked, in those days, by bigger boys and came up screaming. I "chawed

beef'' with the best of them, and made others chaw in turn. I cracked rocks under water when my comrades dived, and went home often with an earache because of it—or of the water in my ears. I learned, too, how unfailing is that mother's test for disobedience in early spring, and how the boy who goes swimming brings home, always, a nose as cold as any dog's.

But why arouse my own regrets? I dare say, now, that were there an Old Home Week, the wiser ones would choose to safeguard their illusions, and to stay far away from that old swimming-hole. I can visualize its old-time glories, and I have a right to ask no more. Were we to try to bring them back—to build a dam again, and wade in boldly—no doubt we'd take more seriously the muddy bottom, the ever-present blood-suckers and the proximity to traveled roads.

## CONTENTMENT.\*

EUGENE FIELD.

Happy the man that, when his day is done,  
Lies down to sleep with nothing to regret—  
The battle he has fought may not be won—  
The fame he has sought be just as fleeting yet;  
Folding at last his hands upon his breast,  
Happy is he, if, hoary and forspent,  
He sinks into the last, eternal rest  
Breathing these only words: "I am content."

But happier he that, while his blood is warm,  
Sees hopes and friendships dead about him lie;  
Bares his brave breast to envy's bitter storm,  
Nor shuns the poison barbs of calumny—  
And, 'mid it all, stands sturdy and elate,  
Girt only in the armor God hath meant  
For him who 'neath the buffetings of fate  
Can say to God and man: "I am content."

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